

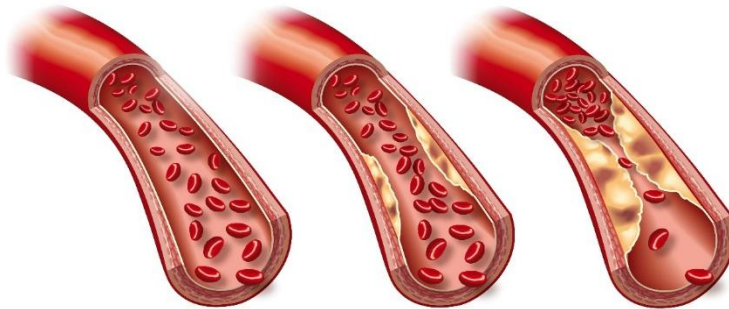


Suffolk Podiatry

Poor Blood Supply to the Feet

What causes it?

Poor blood supply to the legs and feet can be due to a condition known as PAD (short for Peripheral Arterial Disease). PAD happens when fatty deposits build up in the blood vessels of the legs, making them narrower and limiting the blood flow to the legs and feet.



Normal artery

Early PAD

Advanced PAD

Have might it affect you?

Reduced blood flow to the muscles could mean you feel pain in the muscles of your leg after walking a short distance. The pain tends to happen after the same amount of exercise and goes away again when you stop and rest. This is known as “intermittent claudication” and usually occurs in the calf, although you could feel it in the muscles of your thigh or bottom.

- You could have PAD and not be aware of it.
- Having PAD increases your risk of developing a foot ulcer or having an amputation. PAD can also be a sign that you are at risk of heart disease or a stroke.

Have might it affect you?

Treatment your doctor may recommend includes;

- Blood thinning medication to reduce the risk of blood clots.
- Medication to control your blood pressure and cholesterol.
- If you have diabetes, your GP practice will work with you to ensure your blood sugars are well controlled.
- Some people may need to have a surgical procedure to improve their blood flow.

How to help yourself

- If you are currently a smoker, it is important that you stop. There is support available from most pharmacies or GP practices.
- Taking regular, moderate exercise, such as going out for a walk, will help other smaller blood vessels in your legs to expand and improve the blood flow to your legs and feet. Try to build up to a 30-minute walk, 5 times a week. If you are not able to go for a walk, cycling, swimming or chair-based exercise will help.

- Try to eat a healthy diet and to lose weight if you are currently overweight. As with stopping smoking and taking exercise, there is support available to help you <https://feelgoodsuffolk.co.uk/>
- Keeping your skin in good condition will make you less likely to develop a foot ulcer. You can do this by putting moisturising cream on your legs and feet every day, avoiding the area between your toes. You may need to ask someone else to help you
- Check your feet every day or ask someone else to do this for you. If you notice any unusual redness, swelling, discharge or broken skin you should seek medical attention from a podiatrist or your GP as soon as possible.

Critical Limb Ischaemia (CLI): A severe form of PAD

If you develop any of these symptoms you must seek urgent medical attention;

- Constant, severe pain in your feet even when resting-the pain is often worse with the foot elevated such as in bed at night.
- The skin on your toes or feet becoming cold and numb, then turning red and then black.

For more PAD information visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/peripheral-arterial-disease-pad/>

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An NHS service provided by Suffolk GP Federation working with ESNEFT (East Suffolk & North Essex NHS Foundation Trust) in the East, West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust in the West, Suffolk County Council and Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

