# Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)

What is Peripheral Arterial Disease?

Peripheral arterial disease is caused by a build up of fat and other materials including cholesterol inside the arteries. This build up is called plaque.

When the artery walls become thick, hard, narrow and rough inside, this is called atherosclerosis. Blood carrying oxygen cannot flow through these arteries well. As a result, the blood flow to your legs and feet is reduced. This is often called poor circulation.

> **Peripheral Arterial Disease is called PAD for short. It is also called Peripheral Vascular Disease (PVD).**
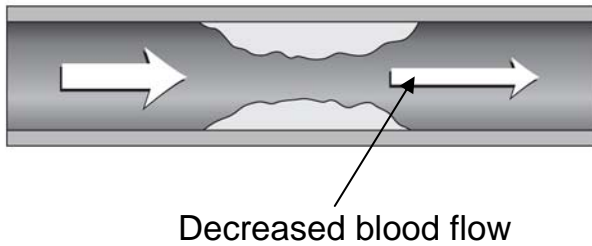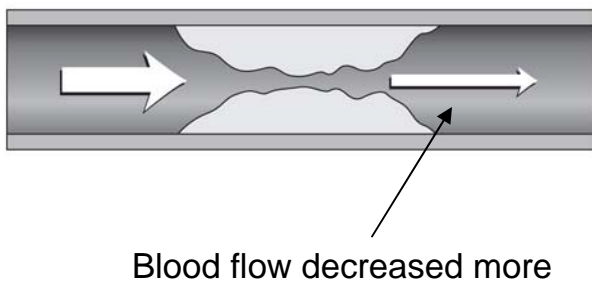
Progression of atherosclerosis

Artery

Smooth blood flow
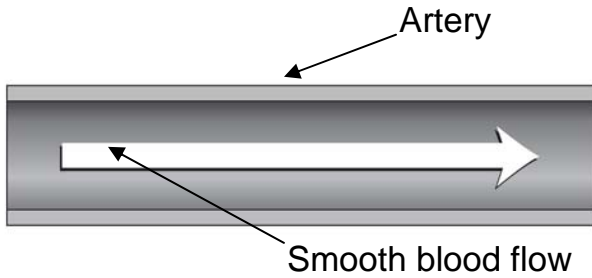
Normal Artery –Blood flows through easily.
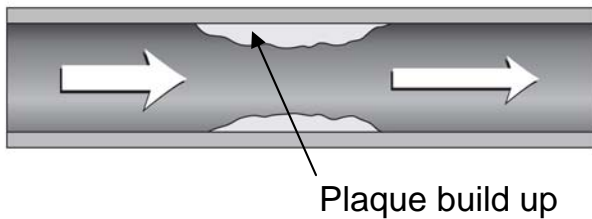
Plaque build up

Damaged Artery – Plaque starts to build up and narrow artery.

Decreased blood flow

Narrowed Artery – Blood flow becomes partially blocked because of build up of plaque.

Blood flow decreased more

Worsening Narrowed Artery – Build up of plaque continues to slow the blood flow even more.

PAD can also affect the arteries that lead to the arms, stomach, kidneys and brain. When arteries become hardened and narrow in one part of the body, it is likely the arteries in other parts are also affected.

People with PAD are likely to have narrowed arteries in their heart and brain. This puts them at risk for heart disease and stroke.

How can I control PAD?

You can often help control PAD by making lifestyle changes such as quitting smoking (if you smoke), eating a healthy diet and including daily exercise.

Making these changes will help slow down the build up of plaque in your arteries:

- ❐ stop smoking
- ❐ control diabetes
- ❐ control blood pressure
- ❐ control cholesterol
- ❐ eat healthy
- ❐ exercise

Your nurse on 5 West has checked off and discussed changes that are right for you.

You will also be given additional information on your risk factors for PAD. Talk with your family doctor for more information.

Nurse's notes:

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Questions for my family doctor:

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