

Smoking and Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD)

Smoking is the number one cause of PAD.

How does smoking affect my arteries?

Smoking damages your arteries by:

- speeding the build up of plaque called atherosclerosis
- making the walls of your arteries thick and the inside of your arteries narrow
- thickens your blood, making it easier to clot

Smoking makes PAD worse. If you continue to smoke with PAD, your risk of having heart attack, stroke or dying will be very high.

How will quitting smoking help me?

Quitting smoking is the most important change you can make for your health. It is never too late. Studies show that people with PAD can lower their risk of having a heart attack, stroke, amputation or dying early when they quit smoking.

Other benefits:

- your blood pressure will be lower
- you lower your chances of getting foot ulcers or losing a leg
- lower your risk for cancer of the mouth, throat, lungs and bladder
- allow you to live longer and better

Making a plan to quit

It's not easy to quit smoking. However, we know that if people follow these steps, they have the best chances of quitting:

1. Set a quit date.
 - Write the date in your calendar.
 - Tell your family and friends.
 - Get rid of all of your cigarettes and smoking tools such as ashtrays and lighters.
2. Get help. Your family doctor can refer you to a quit smoking program.
3. Change your routine. Drink lots of water and chew gum. Find other ways to help reduce cravings such as take a hot bath, go for a walk or read a book.
4. Get medications that can help with the cravings. Talk to your doctor if you think you should try one of them to help you quit smoking.
5. Don't give up. Be prepared for setbacks. If you start again, go back to Step 1. You can do it.

Nurse's notes:

Questions for my family doctor:

Helpful websites:

Peripheral Arterial Disease Coalition www.padcoalition.org
Physicians for a smoke-free Canada www.smoke-free.ca
The Ontario Government www.healthyonario.com
Lung Association of Ontario www.lung.ca