

PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASE

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Peripheral vascular disease is a leading cause of illness and death in Western Society. It arises from blockages that form in our arteries all over our body, secondary to diabetes, smoking, eating fatty foods and the overall aging process in general.

Although it often affects the heart, an area treated by cardiologists, other areas of the body are affected, which include the neck, where the carotid arteries are located, and blockages here can lead to stroke. The arteries leading to the kidneys may also be blocked and can cause hypertension (high blood pressure). The main aorta can become dilated (swollen) and form an aneurysm (weakness in the artery wall), which can rupture or actually become blocked and then cause claudication pain. Claudication pain is defined as pain from walking, sometimes referred to as a "Charley horse" or cramping sensation in the buttocks, thighs or calves that is relieved by resting and limited walking. Claudication can be caused by blockages in the aorta, and/or blockages in the iliac arteries, which lead to the groin, and/or arteries from the groin down to the feet. Often times people in the worst stages of arterial disease continue to have pain even when at rest and most often lying in bed at night. Many times ulcerated feet are a common occurrence and often the toes become black with gangrene.

The treatments for these diseases are varied. Exercise therapy with the possible addition of one or more medications is a viable option. More severe cases can often be treated with stents placed in claudicating areas or other minimally invasive technology. Finally, some of these more severe cases require open surgical procedures to clean an artery or bypass the blocked segment.

This complete range of services is offered by Inverness Surgical Associates, as well as a complete vascular diagnostic lab and wound care center.

May 2006