



VASCULAR &
INTERVENTIONAL
SPECIALISTS

A DIVISION OF CHARLOTTE RADIOLOGY

***Schedule your appointment with the
Vascular & Interventional Specialists
of Charlotte Radiology.***

Our Interventional Radiologists are experts in vascular care, able to treat PAD and a variety of other conditions using minimally invasive techniques.

To schedule a consultation with one of our Interventional Radiologists, please call **704.358.IRMD.**

Visit CharlotteRadiology.com for more information on procedures, technology, our subspecialized physicians and more.



**PERIPHERAL
ARTERY
DISEASE**

The softer side of surgery.

What is peripheral artery disease?

An estimated 10 million Americans may have peripheral artery disease (PAD), a condition in which the arteries that carry blood to the legs, arms, kidneys or bowel become narrowed or clogged, reducing normal blood flow. PAD is most common in patients over 50, as well as in those who smoke, have diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol. Patients with PAD are at a higher risk for heart disease and stroke.

What are the symptoms?

PAD affects both men and women and often goes undiagnosed. Many people mistakenly think the symptoms are a normal part of aging. The following symptoms are associated with PAD:

- Painful cramping in leg or hip that occurs during exercise but subsides when resting (intermittent claudication - the most common symptom of PAD)
- Numbness, tingling and weakness in lower legs and feet
- Burning or aching pain in feet or toes when resting
- Sore on leg or foot that won't heal
- Cold legs or feet
- Color change in skin on legs or feet
- Loss of hair on legs

How is PAD diagnosed?

An Interventional Radiologist (IR) is a doctor who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of PAD. Most commonly PAD is diagnosed during an examination by an IR. Sometimes, an ultrasound is used to confirm the diagnosis. The **ankle-brachial index (ABI)** is a measurement of the blood pressure in the legs and can help determine the presence (or absence) of PAD. ABI screenings last approximately 45 minutes. Occasionally, more sophisticated tests like a CT scan or MRI are used to obtain better visualization of the arteries in the body.

During the clinic visit, the IR will take into account any symptoms before determining whether additional tests are warranted.

How is PAD treated?

The most appropriate treatment for PAD is based on a number of factors, including a patient's overall health and severity of the disease. In some cases, lifestyle changes (diet, exercise, quitting smoking) are enough to stop the progression of PAD and ease symptoms. Sometimes prescription drugs or procedures to open up clogged blood vessels are used to treat PAD. In some cases, surgery may be required, but this is becoming less common as less invasive endovascular treatment options continue to become available.

The following procedures allow our Interventional Radiologists to open blocked blood vessels and restore normal blood flow. These procedures are minimally invasive, which means they can be performed with catheters and other micro-instruments inserted through a small hole in the skin.

- ▶ **ARTERIOGRAM/ANGIOGRAM**, where a small tube (catheter) is inserted into the blood vessel and contrast is injected to assess blood flow and evaluate for blockages
- ▶ **ANGIOPLASTY**, where a balloon is inflated to open the blood vessel
- ▶ **THROMBOLYTIC THERAPY**, where clot-busting drugs are delivered to the site of blockages caused by blood clots
- ▶ **STENTS**, where tiny metal cylinders (stents) are inserted in clogged vessels to act as scaffolding and hold them open

