

# How to Prepare for an Appointment with a Vascular Surgeon

## Who needs to see a vascular surgeon?

A vascular surgeon is a highly trained physician who manages patients with all forms of vascular disease, so almost any patient might have occasion to see such a specialist. This includes:

- Patients with aneurysms in almost any location in the chest, abdomen, or extremities.
- Patients with peripheral arterial disease (PAD), whether symptoms are minor or more threatening to the leg.
- Many patients with carotid disease or blockage will see a vascular surgeon for stroke prevention and treatment.
- Patients with kidney failure require dialysis access procedures, also provided by vascular surgeons.
- Patients with varicose veins, spider veins, or leg ulcers caused by venous disease.

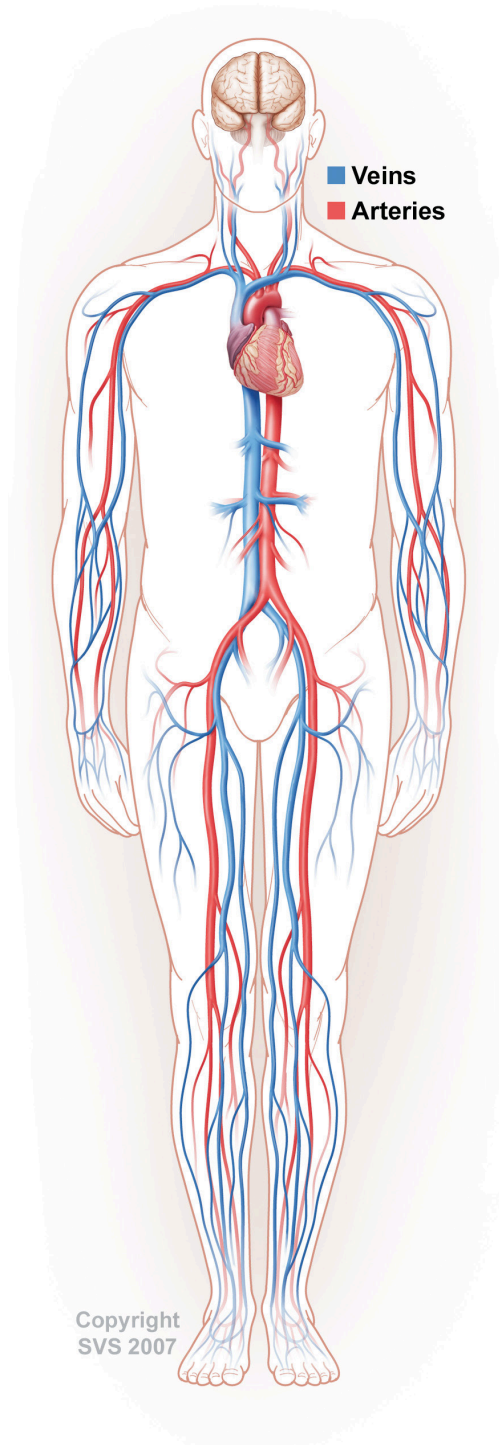
Vascular surgeons are the only professionals who can offer all forms of treatment to this wide-ranging group of patients.

## What testing might have led to a recommendation to visit a vascular surgeon?

Your primary care physician may have identified vascular disease with one of many different examinations.

- Bruit, or sound heard in the neck.
- History of stroke-like symptoms may prompt a carotid ultrasound (duplex scan), a CT scan, or MR scan may lead to a consultation with a vascular surgeon.
- An ultrasound or CT scan may identify an aneurysm to be evaluated by a vascular surgeon.
- An examination of the pulses in the legs or a Doppler study (ABI) could demonstrate PAD prompting further evaluation and treatment provided by a vascular surgeon.

Please call with any questions:



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### What should I wear to an appointment with a vascular surgeon?

Comfortable, casual clothing is appropriate for an appointment with a vascular surgeon. If leg symptoms or problems are involved be prepared to remove shoes, socks, and pants to allow an adequate examination. Usually some sort of gown or exam shorts will be available in the examination room.

### What should I bring with me for an appointment with a vascular surgeon?

Comfortable, casual clothing is appropriate for an appointment with a vascular surgeon. If leg symptoms or problems are involved be prepared to remove shoes, socks, and pants to allow an adequate examination. Usually some sort of gown or exam shorts will be available in the examination room.

It is important to be prepared for an appointment with a vascular surgeon. A good history, complete background information and testing, and any previous procedure history will greatly assist your vascular surgeon in being able to best evaluate and plan treatment for any vascular disease problem. Be prepared to carefully describe any symptoms that you believe may be referable to vascular disease.

Tell the vascular surgeon how long symptoms have been present, when and where they occur, and how severe they seem.

- Take a list of medications and existing diseases under treatment.
- Take recent blood test results.
- Take reports from tests that have been performed. This might include reports of Doppler or ultrasound studies, CT scans, angiograms, or MRI examinations. In the case of CT scans, MRI examinations, or angiograms, actual films are most helpful and may be obtained at the facility where the examination was performed, usually on a CD copy. Having the actual films of these examinations greatly simplifies the work necessary for the vascular surgeon so the maximum information will be available at the time of your appointment.

**Please call with any questions:**

- Take the dates and records of any previous vascular surgery, angioplasty, or stenting. These are helpful in the evaluation of issues that are frequently quite complex. Having a record of these procedures done in the past can be extremely helpful and may avoid unnecessary repetitive testing.

Your vascular surgeon will do a physical examination, and to help with further assessment. They may order non-invasive vascular laboratory examinations which use ultrasound to evaluate blockage in the arteries or veins.

**Vascular surgeons are the only physicians treating vascular disease today who can perform all treatment options available, including medical management, minimally invasive endovascular procedures including balloon angioplasty, atherectomy, and stent procedures, and open surgical repair including bypass.**



**Only when you see a vascular surgeon who offers all treatment modalities will you be assured of receiving the care that is most appropriate to your condition.**

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