

# When Should You See A Vascular Surgeon?

## Who is a vascular surgeon?

A vascular surgeon is a highly trained physician dedicated exclusively to the care of disorders of the circulatory system, including the arteries and the veins. The arteries carry blood from the heart to the vital organs and limbs, and the veins that return the blood back to the heart.

- Conditions that affect the arteries include aneurysms, an enlargement or “bulge” in an artery, and atherosclerosis, plaque that builds up inside arteries blocking of blood flow.
- Conditions that affect the veins include varicose veins and venous thrombosis, or blood clots. Vascular surgeons provide comprehensive care for patients with these conditions.

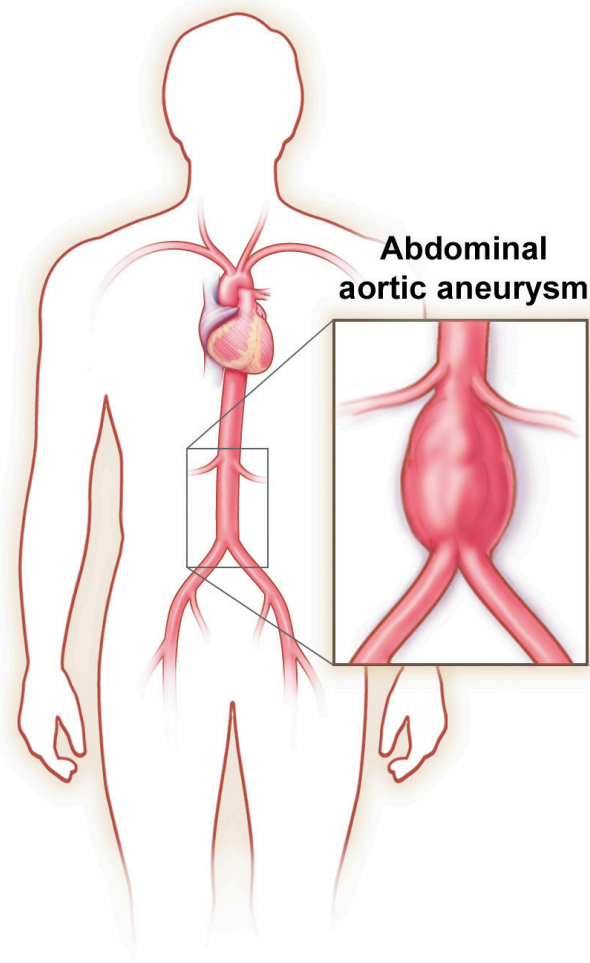
Vascular surgeons help patients optimally manage these conditions, whether through diet, exercise and medication, or interventional procedures. Vascular surgeons are the only physicians trained to perform minimally invasive procedures, like angioplasty and stent, and traditional surgery.

## When should you see a vascular surgeon?

### If you have been diagnosed with an aneurysm.

An aneurysm is an enlargement of an artery. It can occur in the chest, abdomen or extremities. An aneurysm can be diagnosed with an ultrasound, a CT scan, or an MRI. In some aneurysms, as they enlarge, the wall of the artery becomes progressively thin and can lead to life-threatening rupture. This is typical of an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Other aneurysms, usually found in the extremities, can clot causing acute lack of circulation to the limb and possible amputation. Vascular surgeons know which types are likely to rupture and which are likely to clot. They know how to determine when complications



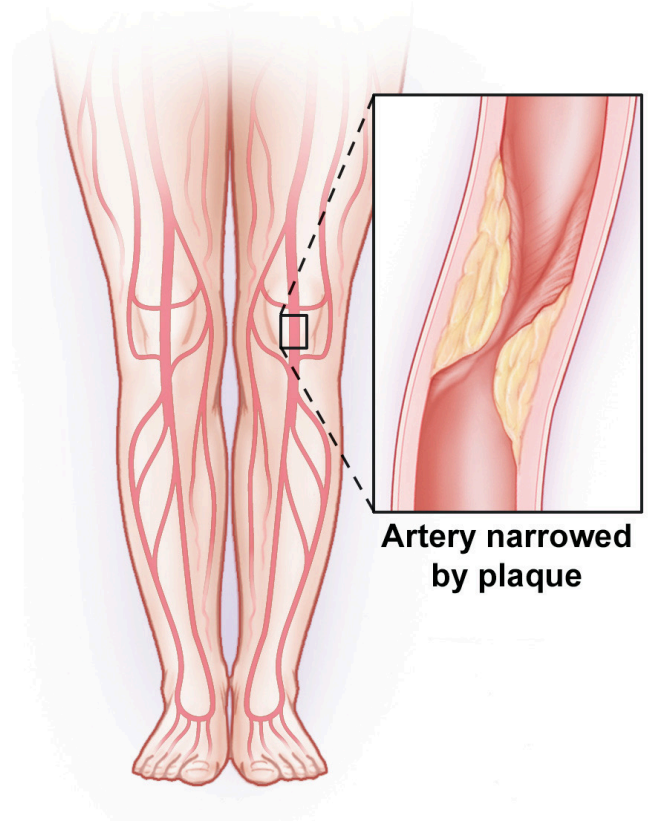
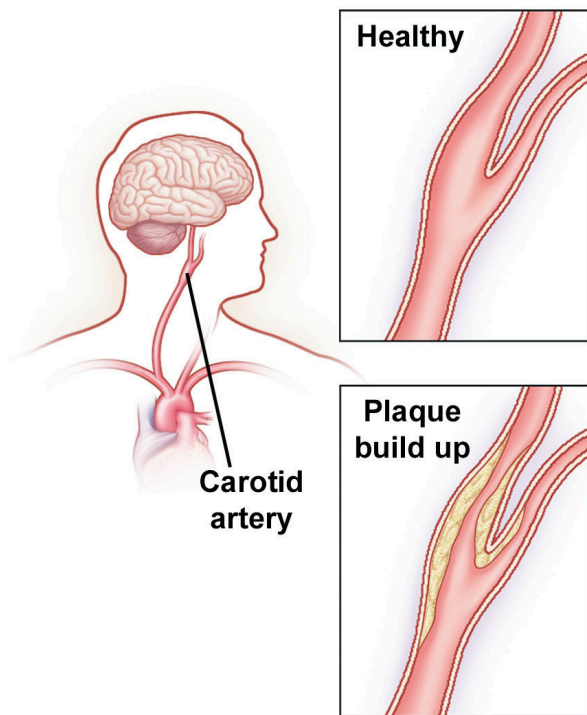
may occur. A vascular surgeon can tell you whether an aneurysm needs to be repaired when it has been diagnosed, or whether it is safe to monitor it. Multiple methods of repair are available. Should repair be required, a vascular surgeon can guide you in making the right choice for the method used. Only vascular surgeons are able to perform all possible types of repair.

Please call with any questions:

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### If you have been diagnosed with atherosclerosis of the carotid artery.

Atherosclerosis is often called "hardening of the arteries." The carotid arteries are found in the neck, and are the main route of blood supply to the brain. Sometimes, small pieces of atherosclerotic plaque inside the artery can break off and travel to the area of blood flow. If a piece of atherosclerotic plaque breaks off in the carotid artery, it may travel to the brain and cause a stroke. Sometimes, a transient ischemic attack (TIA) or mini-stroke may occur. A TIA is a warning that a more severe stroke is likely in the near future. More often, the plaque will not have caused symptoms, but is identified on an ultrasound of the carotid arteries. A vascular surgeon can tell you if your artery is narrowed enough to require intervention, and whether that is better done with an operation, a carotid endarterectomy, or a stent. A vascular surgeon is the only physician trained to perform both procedures.



### If you have been diagnosed with peripheral arterial disease (PAD).

In PAD, atherosclerotic plaques in the leg arteries cause restriction of blood flow. In mild and moderate cases, patients may suffer muscle pain with walking, called claudication. In severe cases, PAD can cause severe foot pain, or gangrene. Without prompt treatment, amputation can result. In most instances, PAD requires no intervention. Diet modification, exercise, and medication are often all that is required. In severe cases, a balloon angioplasty with a stent may be appropriate, or a bypass operation may be the better option. A vascular surgeon will help you make the right choice for your circumstance.

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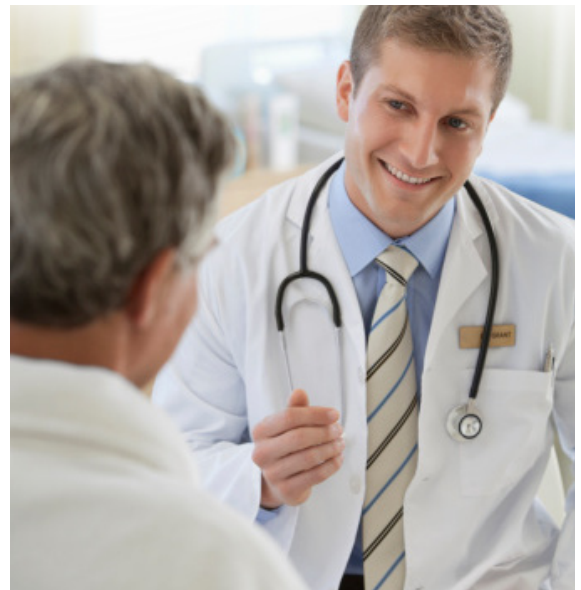
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**If you have varicose veins or other vein problems.**

Varicose veins are unsightly, but contrary to popular belief, they can also cause health problems. They can cause leg pain and swelling. They can lead to blood clots in the leg. They may also cause ulcers on the leg that are resistant to healing. Other types of vein problems can cause similar leg problems. A vascular surgeon can fully evaluate your leg veins, and develop the right treatment plan for you.

If you are concerned that you have circulatory problems. Circulation problems are sometimes difficult to diagnose. They can masquerade as other medical conditions. Some symptoms that mimic circulation problems are actually other physical problems, like nerve or joint problems. A vascular surgeon is the best person to help you diagnose and treat any circulatory problem you may have.

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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