

# FOOTPRINTS

AN INFORMATIONAL NEWSLETTER FOR PATIENTS OF APMA MEMBER PODIATRISTS

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SPRING EDITION

## PODIATRISTS: FIRST RESPONDERS FOR VASCULAR DISEASE



### DO YOU KNOW WHAT VASCULAR DISEASE IS?

Vascular disease is the buildup of plaque and cholesterol in arteries throughout your body. Did you also know that your feet are an early warning system for vascular disease? It's true! Your feet are often the first place where signs and symptoms of vascular disease appear. That is why podiatrists are often the first physicians to spot and diagnose vascular disease.

### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS OF VASCULAR DISEASE?

#### Common symptoms include the following:

- Fatigue, tiredness, or pain in your legs, thighs, or buttocks that always happens when you walk but goes away when you rest
- Foot or toe pain at rest that often disturbs your sleep
- Skin wounds or ulcers on your feet or toes that are slow to heal (or that do not heal for 8–12 weeks)

Although these are common symptoms of vascular disease, many individuals with vascular disease do not experience typical leg symptoms such as cramping, pain, or fatigue known as claudication.

### VASCULAR DISEASE CAN ALSO MANIFEST ITSELF IN THE FORM OF ULCERS.

Here is what you need to know about the two common types of ulcers associated with vascular disease:

#### Common signs of a venous ulcer:

- Shallow or superficial appearance
- Irregular shape
- Small to large
- Brownish in appearance
- Skin tends to be thick
- Painful, usually related to edema, or swelling

You'll most likely find a venous ulcer on the lower leg and ankle.

## Common signs of an arterial ulcer:

- Punched-out appearance
- Smooth wound edges
- Cool to the touch
- Skin is pale, shiny, taut, and thin
- Minimal to no hair growth on the limbs
- Painful, especially at night

You'll most likely find an arterial ulcer on the side of the foot, but one can occur anywhere on the lower leg or foot.

**AS YOU CAN SEE, SIGNS OF VASCULAR DISEASE CAN GO FROM A SIMPLE PAIN IN YOUR FOOT OR TOES, TO AN ULCER. THAT IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW YOUR RISK FOR VASCULAR DISEASE.**



## NOT SURE IF YOU ARE AT RISK FOR VASCULAR DISEASE? Take this quick quiz to find out!

### Assessing Your Risk for Vascular Disease: Do you...



1. Smoke?

- YES  NO



2. Have cardiovascular disease or a family history of cardiovascular disease?

- YES  NO



3. Use oral contraceptives?

- YES  NO



4. Have high cholesterol or blood pressure?

- YES  NO



5. Have a history of obesity or difficulty maintaining a healthy weight?

- YES  NO



6. Have diabetes?

- YES  NO

If you answered “yes” to one or more of these questions, then you are at risk for vascular disease. Fortunately, there are several preventive measures you can take to decrease your risk for developing vascular disease. Talk with your podiatrist today to find out more about your risk for vascular disease and form a preventive treatment plan that’s right for you!