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Why Do I Need to Bring My Medication to Every Visit?

Article by Diane Marolda, MSN, APN-C

*"I already gave it to you last time"
 "You should know what I am taking since you prescribed it!"*

Responses like this are very common. However, 90% of the time there has been some change in the medication, whether it is a dose or frequency change, or a new medication added or discontinued. However small the change, your provider needs an accurate list in order to provide the best care possible. If the list is inaccurate, incorrect, or missing information, there is a greater risk for you! Medication interactions, renewals, and tolerance issues are often related to miscommunication regarding the current medication list. We must ensure that we know exactly what you are taking before we prescribe new medication or make a change in your treatment.

There are many phone apps that are available to conveniently store your medication list. You can also request a copy of our current record of your medications through our patient portal, and verify its accuracy. So before you leave the house for your next appointment, remember to bring your list, or better yet, bring the medication bottles themselves!

Why Do I Need to Present My Insurance Card at Each Visit?

Article by Ruck Davids, CNMT, NCT

Insurance plan benefits, eligibility and billing addresses change frequently. In order to ensure proper billing and to verify that the information stored within our system is correct, we require that you present your insurance card at each office visit. Checking your insurance card only takes a minute and it can ensure accurate and timely billing. According to HCA policy, our office staff is directed to ask for this information and may be unable to proceed with your check-in without it. We greatly appreciate your cooperation with this process as it is our goal to make your check-in as smooth as possible. If you have any concerns or comments with this policy, you can contact us through our patient portal.

Are You At Risk for Having an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm?

Article by Chris Rose, RVT

The aorta is the largest artery and the major supplier of blood to the body. An abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is an enlarged segment within the lower part of your aorta. Having an abdominal aortic aneurysm is a potentially dangerous situation. If the aneurysm becomes large enough and ruptures, life threatening bleeding may occur.

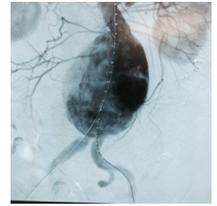
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Are You At Risk for Having an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm?

Continued from front page... Most abdominal aortic aneurysms grow slowly and usually without symptoms. As an aneurysm enlarges some people may notice a pulsating feeling within the abdomen (usually near the navel), deep constant pain in your abdomen, or back pain. Many people never have symptoms, making detection more difficult.

Abdominal aortic aneurysm **risk factors** include: **age > 65 yrs- especially males, family history of AAA, and tobacco use.** Early detection is very important and easy with a simple screening ultrasound. If you happen to have an aortic aneurysm, routine follow-up is an important part of the management of this condition. Many aneurysms are small and never grow to the point where they need to be repaired; however, some grow to the point where intervention is recommended. This typically occurs when the aneurysm is around 5 cm or greater in size.

Open aortic surgery used to be the standard treatment for this condition, but in recent years has been replaced by the less invasive AAA stenting procedure. This procedure can be performed by one of our cardiologists at our local hospitals and usually involves just one overnight stay. If you have any further questions or feel that you may be at risk of having an abdominal aortic aneurysm, do not hesitate to ask your cardiologist at your next office visit.



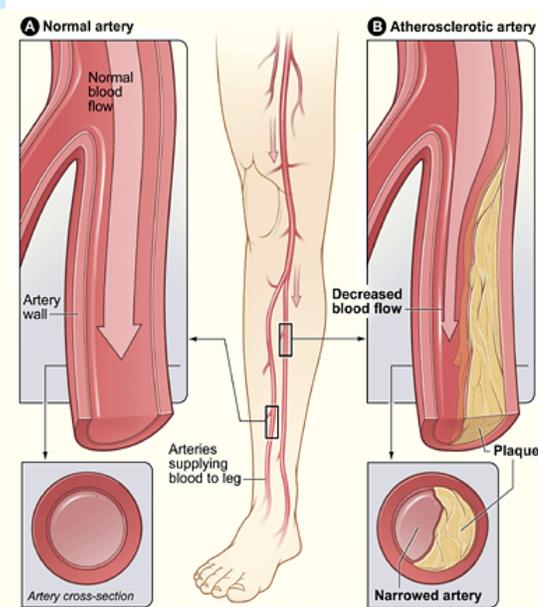
AAA (Before)



AAA (After)

Tired Legs May Be a Sign or Symptom of Something More Serious

Article by Ruck Davids, CNMT, NCT



Those tired legs may not be just because of a long day. That tight aching or squeezing pain in your buttocks, thighs, or calf may be a sign of Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD). PAD is a common circulatory problem in which narrowed arteries reduce the blood flow to your limbs and that squeezing pain known as intermittent claudication is one of the first signs of PAD. Other signs and symptoms of PAD are weak or tired legs, cramping in your thighs or buttocks, difficulty walking or balancing, cold and numb feet and toes, and sores that are slow to heal.

The diagnosis of PAD begins with a physical examination and then may lead to simple non-invasive tests that we perform in our office. Treatment for peripheral arterial disease may focus on healthy lifestyle changes first. Other more invasive treatment for PAD may involve surgery that either bypasses the narrowed vessel or uses a stent to reopen them. These are normally used in more severe cases of PAD. You may also need to take medicines to ease pain or to help you manage other health problems. It's important to do what

you can to improve your health and possibly reverse the buildup of plaque in your arteries because of the increased risk of heart attack or stroke. Making healthy changes can reduce this risk. One of these changes is to stop smoking. If your doctor says it's safe, get regular exercise. Try to walk at least 30 minutes a day. Eat healthy foods and try to lose weight.

So remember, those tired legs may be more than tired limbs. If you think you have signs and symptoms of PAD we encourage you to make an appointment for a proper evaluation.