

Peripheral Artery Disease

What is peripheral artery disease?

Peripheral artery disease means that one or more of the arteries that supply blood to the arms or legs are narrowed or blocked. The narrowing or blockage reduces blood flow to the arms or legs. Symptoms, which may include pain, coldness, or skin sores that do not heal well, are more common in the legs. Many people may have pain even while they are resting. However, some people may only notice pain with exercise or activity.

What can I expect in the hospital?

You may need to stay in the hospital because:

- You have a medical condition which was caused by your peripheral artery disease
- You have symptoms which need immediate treatment
- You have chosen to have surgery to treat your peripheral artery disease

Several things may be done while you are in the hospital to monitor, test, and treat your condition. They include:

Monitoring

- You will be checked often by the hospital staff.
- Your heart rate, blood pressure, and temperature will be checked regularly.
- A heart (cardiac) monitor may be used to check your heartbeat.
- Your blood oxygen level will be monitored by a sensor that is attached to your finger or earlobe.
- Your fluid intake may be monitored closely by keeping track of everything you eat and drink and any IV fluids you receive.

Testing

Testing may include:

- Blood tests to check for infections
- Blood, urine, or other tests to monitor how well your organs are functioning
- Tests to look for abnormalities in your blood vessels and heart, which may include:
 - Angiography (also called arteriography): A series of X-rays taken after your healthcare provider places a long, thin, flexible tube (catheter) into a blood vessel in your groin and up to your heart. A special dye is injected into your blood vessels, to look for areas where the dye may be leaking out of a blood vessel or blocked blood vessels
 - Ankle-brachial index (ABI): A test in which your healthcare measures the blood pressure in your arm and leg, while using ultrasound (sound waves) to see the blood flowing through the blood vessels in the arm or leg
 - Blood tests to check cholesterol levels in the blood

- Ultrasound scan: Sound waves and their echoes are passed through your body from a small device (called a transducer) that is held against your skin to create pictures of the inside of the blood vessels

Treatment

The treatment for peripheral artery disease depends on your symptoms, how well you respond to treatment, your overall health, and any complications you may have.

- You will have a small tube (IV catheter) inserted into a vein in your hand or arm. This will allow for medicine to be given directly into your blood and to give you fluids, if needed.
- You may receive oxygen through a small tube placed under your nose or through a mask placed over your face.
- If needed, you will get medicine for pain control, to treat abnormal heart rhythms, to lower your blood pressure and for other symptoms.
- You may need a procedure to open up or bypass the narrowed or blocked arteries and improve blood flow.
- You may need surgery to treat peripheral artery disease. Surgery may include:
 - Angioplasty: A procedure in which your healthcare provider inserts a flexible tube called a balloon catheter into a blocked artery to unblock it. It opens up your artery without needing to have major surgery and allows blood to flow. A metal mesh device called a stent may be left in the artery to help keep the blood vessel open.
 - Bypass surgery: Surgery in which a blood vessel from another part of your body is used to create a new route for blood to flow around a blockage in the blocked or narrowed artery
- Your provider may prescribe medicine to:
 - Treat pain
 - Treat or prevent an infection
 - Relax and widen blood vessels and allow blood to flow through them easier
 - Help prevent blood clots
 - Slow the heart rate and reduce the workload of the heart
 - Control cholesterol levels
 - Reduce fluid build-up and swelling in the body

What can I do to help?

- You will need to tell your healthcare team if you have new or worsening:
 - Unusual or unexpected bleeding or bruising or bleeding that does not stop
 - Bluish color of the skin on your leg or toes
 - Chest discomfort (pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain) that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back, or chest discomfort that goes to your arms, neck, jaw or back
 - Fast, slow, or irregular heartbeat

- If you had surgery, signs of infection around your surgical wound. These include:
 - The area around your wound is more red or painful
 - The wound area is very warm to touch
 - You have blood, pus, or other fluid coming from your wound area
 - You have chills or muscle aches
- Trouble breathing
- Warmth, redness, or pain in your affected leg or arm
- Weakness, numbness, tingling or pain in your face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of your body
- Ask questions about any medicine, treatment, or information that you do not understand.

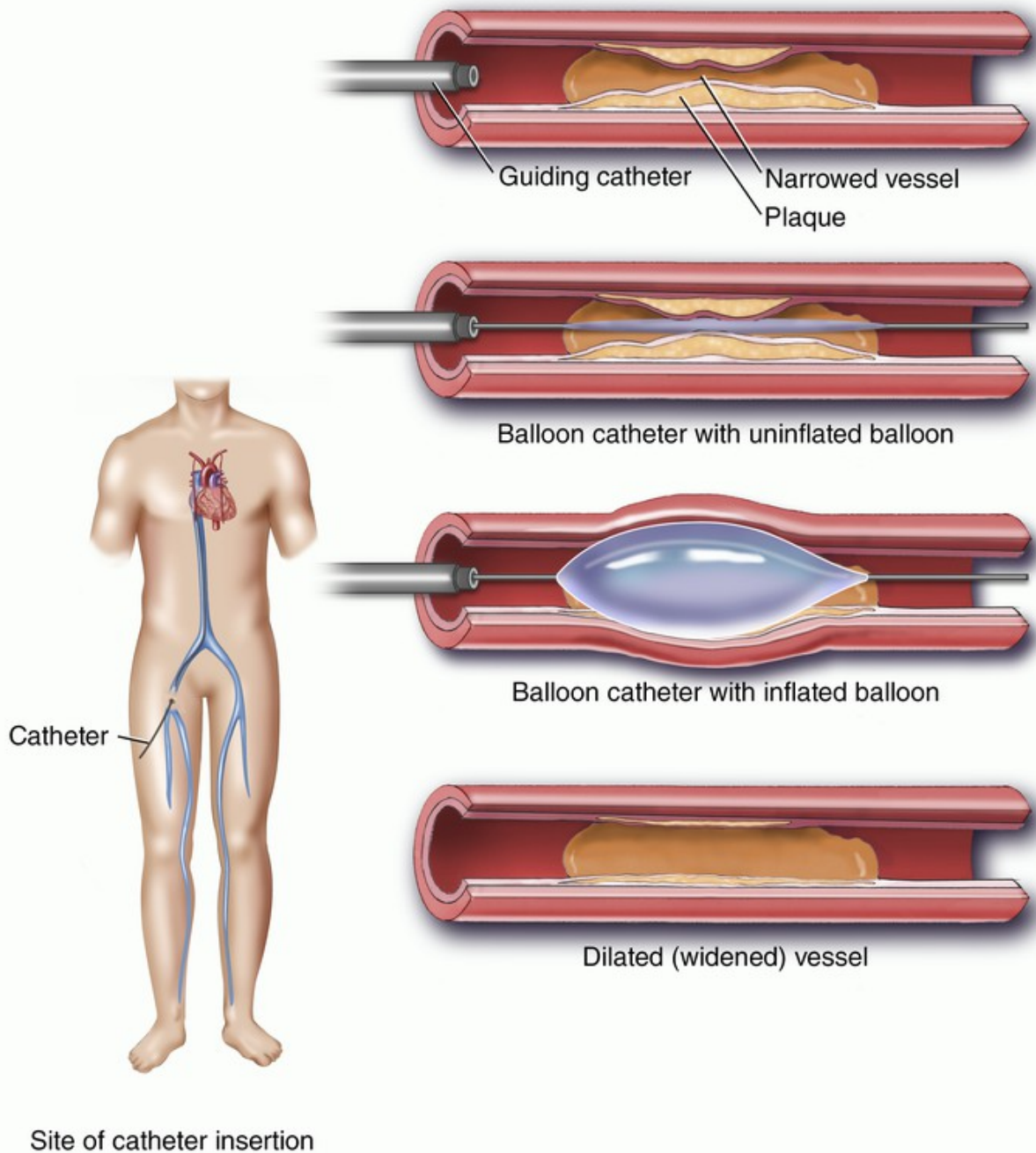
How long will I be in the hospital?

How long you stay in the hospital depends on many factors. The average amount of time to stay in the hospital with peripheral artery disease is 3 to 5 days.

Developed by RelayHealth.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

Blood Vessel Dilation with Balloon Catheter



Copyright ©2014 McKesson Corporation and/or one of its subsidiaries. All rights reserved.