



HEALTH AWARENESS

Online Quiz Can Help Assess Health Risks

(NAPSA)—A simple test could prove to be a lifesaving step for the millions of Americans with a common vascular disorder.

An estimated 10 million Americans have peripheral arterial disease (PAD), and research shows that the highest risk populations include African-Americans, seniors and diabetics. Symptoms such as leg pain while walking, numbness and tingling in the lower legs and feet, coldness in the lower legs and feet, or ulcers or sores on the legs or feet that don't heal could be warning signs.

PAD develops mostly as a result of atherosclerosis, a condition that occurs when cholesterol and scar tissue build up, forming a substance called plaque, which narrows and clogs the arteries and slows blood flow to the legs. PAD is a red flag for several life-threatening diseases, such as heart attack and stroke.

The Society of Interventional Radiology Foundation's Legs for Life® program offers a free, year-round, online quiz to assess health, family and lifestyle risks for PAD. It is the largest, longest-running and most inclusive national vascular disease-screening program in the United States. Nearly 322,000 people have been screened to date, with one in four found to be at risk for PAD.

"Early detection and management of peripheral arterial disease, or PAD, can help prevent heart attack or stroke," said interventional radiologist Timothy P. Murphy, M.D. "Older men and women need to be examined with the ankle brachial index [ABI] test—a painless blood pressure test that compares blood pressure in the legs to blood pressure in the arms to determine how well blood is flowing and if additional tests

Get An ABI Test If You:

- Have cramping in your leg when walking or exercising that is relieved by resting
- Are over age 50
- Have high cholesterol, a high lipid blood test or high blood pressure
- Have a family history of vascular disease, such as PAD, aneurysm, heart attack or stroke
- Have diabetes
- Smoke now or have ever smoked
- Are African-American.



are needed—that can diagnose PAD. Individuals need to know their ABI number the way they know their cholesterol, blood pressure or blood sugar number; it can save their lives."

Legs for Life® began a decade ago because interventional radiologists—vascular experts who treat PAD—recognized that the disease is a major public health problem with a growing incidence, yet awareness among the general public and nonvascular health care providers is low.

"The public at large—as well as the medical community—needs to appreciate the importance of the diagnosis of PAD in terms of symptoms and avoiding amputation," added Murphy, "but also important is how a diagnosis of PAD entails added risk of heart attack, stroke and death."

Many interventional radiologists offer year-round screening by appointment. To request an appointment or to take the free PAD risk assessment quiz, results of which should be reviewed with your doctor, visit www.legsforlife.org.