

Coventry and Warwickshire Vascular Unit

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening

What is an aneurysm?

An aneurysm is a stretching of a weakened artery, which balloons out rather like a worn motor car tyre. The wall of the artery becomes thinned by loss of its elastic tissue and the artery then inflates making it likely to burst. The most common artery to be affected is the aorta, which is the main artery in the abdomen (tummy). In England and Wales, between 6,000 and 10,000 people each year suffer from rupture of an abdominal aortic aneurysm and the NHS is committed to try to reduce this number. As most of these patients are men over the age of 60 years the NHS in England and Wales has introduced a National Abdominal Aortic Screening Programme to screen all men at the age of 65 to look for AAA but some people might have an increased risk at a younger age. Smoking and high blood pressure are known to increase the risk.

Who is at risk?

It is known that men over the age of 60 years, people with a sibling or parent who has had an aneurysm, or people with other arterial disease (angina, hardening of the arteries or high blood pressure) are at risk.

Here at UHCW NHS Trust we offer an ultrasound scan to people who have an increased risk of developing an AAA. If you have:

- A brother or sister who has a confirmed AAA
- A parent who has an AAA
- A child who has an AAA
- A strong family history of AAA (more than 1 aunt or uncle with an AAA)

And you are 45 or over, please discuss with your doctor or telephone



Patient Information

Alison Kite on 024 7696 5569 or Suzanne Davies 024 7696 6914 to arrange a scan.

How is an abdominal aortic aneurysm detected?

Most people do not know that they have an AAA as few develop symptoms from an aneurysm. An ultrasound scan of the tummy will detect your aorta and allow us to take measurements of it to ensure it is of a normal size. The ultrasound scan will take approximately 5 -10 minutes to complete and is a painless test that involves passing a probe (and jelly) over your tummy, the same type of scan that pregnant ladies have. You will be informed of the results of this scan during your hospital appointment.

Do I need a further follow up?

People with a family history of AAA would be offered 10-yearly follow up scans until the age of 65 to ensure that they do not develop an AAA. Research has shown that if at 65 you have a normal sized aorta then you would have a very low chance of developing an AAA and hence no further scans would be offered.

If an AAA is detected then we would scan you regularly (either 3 monthly, 6 monthly or yearly depending upon the size of the AAA) to monitor its growth rate. You will be made aware of when we will scan you next, during your original scanning appointment.

If you would like to discuss the information in this booklet, please contact a Vascular Nurse Specialist:

Alison Kite on 024 7696 5569 or Suzanne Davies, Lauren Wells, Zoe Noakes on 024 7696 6914

We hope that you have found your treatment by the Vascular Services team to your satisfaction. In order to improve our service, we welcome your comments, compliments and complaints concerning the care that you have received. This can be done by contacting the Vascular Nurses as above or PALS.

Patient Information

Useful Contacts

PALS (Patient advice and Liaison Service): 0800 0284203

Stop Smoking Coventry: 0300 200 0011 www.covwarkpt.nhs.uk/

Stop for Life: 0800 612 4580 help@stop4life.co.uk

Stop Smoking services: 024 7696 4760
stopsmoking.services@uhcw.nhs.uk

nefit Enquiry Line: 0800 882200

Vascular Conditions www.vascularsociety.org.uk
www.circulationfoundation.org.uk

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Document History

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