

Vascular Unit

Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening

What is an aneurysm?

An abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is a bulge or swelling in the aorta - the main blood vessel that runs from the heart down through the chest and tummy.

An AAA can be dangerous if it is not spotted early on.

It can get bigger over time and could burst (rupture), causing life-threatening bleeding.

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. Smoking and high blood pressure are known to increase the risk of developing an aneurysm, even without a family history.

Here at UHCW NHS Trust we offer an ultrasound scan to people who have an increased risk of developing an AAA. If you have one of the below and you are 45 or over, please discuss with your doctor or telephone the vascular nursing team on 024 7696 5569 or 024 7696 6914 to arrange a scan:

- 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)



Patient Information

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 your tummy will detect your aorta and allow us to take measurements of it to make sure it is of a normal size.

The ultrasound scan will take approximately 5 -10 minutes to complete and is a painless test. An ultrasound involves passing a probe (and jelly) over your tummy – it is the same type of scan that pregnant ladies have. You will be given 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 make sure that they do not develop an AAA. Research has shown that if at 65 you have a normal sized aorta, you have a very low chance of developing an AAA, so no further scans would be offered.

If an AAA is detected, we will 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

Ellena Smedley, Edward Lopez on 024 7696 6914

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us on 024 7696 5569 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Patient Information

Did we get it right?

We would like you to tell us what you think about our services. This helps us make further improvements and recognise members of staff who provide a good service.

Have your say. Scan the QR code or visit:

www.uhcw.nhs.uk/feedback



Document History

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