

# Peripheral Artery Disease & Critical Limb Ischemia Overview

## PERIPHERAL ARTERY DISEASE (PAD)

PAD is a disease of the blood vessels in the legs and feet that occurs when arteries become narrow or clogged and don't receive enough blood flow to meet the body's needs. This disease causes muscle pain in some individuals when they are active, however others experience little to no symptoms.<sup>1</sup>

A recent analysis suggests more than 8 million Americans have peripheral artery disease, or PAD, with 12-20% of individuals ages 65+ being affected.<sup>2</sup>

### MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:<sup>3</sup>

- ▶ Cramping in the hip, thigh or calf muscles
- ▶ Leg numbness/weakness
- ▶ Sores on toes, feet or legs
- ▶ Color changes in the skin of the feet
- ▶ Lower temperature in one leg compared to the other
- ▶ Poor or decreased nail and hair growth on toes or legs

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, clogged arteries in the legs, just like clogged arteries in the heart, put individuals at risk for heart attack or stroke.<sup>4</sup> The impact of PAD may be reduced or slowed by making certain lifestyle changes, like quitting smoking, exercising and eating a healthy diet.<sup>5</sup>

## CRITICAL LIMB ISCHEMIA (CLI)

When left untreated, PAD can lead to critical limb ischemia (CLI), a more serious form of the disease.<sup>6</sup>

CLI patients experience similar symptoms to PAD patients; however, CLI symptoms can significantly increase in severity from pain when resting, to open sores, to life-threatening conditions like gangrene, and can eventually require limb amputation in some patients.<sup>8</sup>

There are more than one million people in the United States living with CLI.<sup>7</sup>

**FOR APPROXIMATELY 25% OF CLI PATIENTS, THE PRIMARY TREATMENT IS AMPUTATION.<sup>9</sup>**

While traditional procedures to restore blood flow, such as stenting and angioplasty, are common, many CLI patients aren't eligible for those treatments.

The negative effects of amputation are significant and include permanent disability and reduction of functional status – all which lead to decreased quality of life.<sup>10</sup> The quality of life for CLI patients has been compared to that of patients with terminal cancer.<sup>11-14</sup>

**Due to the severity of the condition and poor prognosis, it is important to address these symptoms early in the progression of the condition.**



## ENDNOTES

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