

SeniorCircle plus

NEWS AND HEALTH INFORMATION FOR SENIORS

SPRING 2006

Testing 1, 2, 3

Could you have peripheral artery disease? Learn how you can help prevent heart attack and stroke with a simple test

We've all heard of clogged arteries in the heart. But did you know the arteries in your arms or legs or brain can become clogged in the same way? Fatty cholesterol builds up inside the walls of these peripheral (outside the heart) arteries. Eventually, this buildup can harden and block the flow of blood, which can lead to heart attack, stroke and amputation—even death.

Who's at Risk

Known as PAD (peripheral arterial disease), the condition affects millions of Americans, and one in every five people over 70 has the disease, according to the Vascular Disease Foundation. Symptoms include discomfort or cramping and pain in the legs when walking or

at rest. While some people may not have symptoms, risk factors include a personal or family history of diabetes, smoking, hypertension, high blood cholesterol and obesity.

Get Tested

A simple, non-invasive test to detect PAD is available at the Cleveland Clinic Heart and Vascular Institute. During the test, called the ankle-brachial pressure index, your doctor measures the blood pressure in your feet and arms, calculates your risk factors, and determines if further testing or treatment is necessary. The Heart and Vascular Institute has recently added more than 20 new cardiologists, making it one of the most



comprehensive cardiovascular medicine teams on the planet.

If you have symptoms of PAD or feel you may be at risk, call the Cleveland Clinic Heart and Vascular Institute at **216/444-4420** or **800/223-2273, ext. 4420**, for an appointment. ●

THE CLEVELAND CLINIC FOUNDATION 

Is Hip Replacement Right for You?

If hip pain prevents you from enjoying life, surgery may be an option. Most patients decide to have a hip replacement when the pain in their joints becomes unbearable or when a loss of function affects their ability to enjoy daily activities such as taking a walk or shopping. But how do you know which procedure and implant is right for you?

The free video, "Joint Decision: Solutions for Hip Pain," explains new implants and features patients whose lives changed following surgery. You'll also meet surgeons from the Cleveland Clinic Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, which has been consistently ranked one of the nation's top five orthopaedic programs by *U.S. News & World Report*. For a free video, call **800/890-2467**. To schedule an appointment, call **216/444-BONE (2663)**.

Need a physician? Call the Cleveland Clinic Appointment Center at 216/444-2273 or 800/223-2273.

The Season for Sneezin'

How to tell the difference between a cold and allergies

Ah, springtime. The sun is shining, the birds are chirping and “achoo!”—you’re stuck in bed and can’t enjoy any of it. But are your sneezes and sniffles caused by the blooming flora or the common cold? Learn the difference—and the different treatments—for yourself.

In instance, allergy symptoms begin almost immediately following exposure to an allergen. But cold symptoms may take a few days to appear after exposure to the virus. And while a cold can last several days to two weeks, allergies last as long as you are exposed to the allergen—even

symptoms can lead to more serious conditions, including sinusitis and ear infections, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

Neither seasonal allergies nor common colds have a cure, but their symptoms can be treated. Relieve your cold by:

- resting in bed
- drinking plenty of fluids
- taking over-the-counter cold medicines, including decongestants and cough suppressants
- taking aspirin for headache or fever
- gargling salt water, if sore throat is present.

Antibiotics should not be used to treat the common cold—they do not kill viruses and may even make your situation worse.



Scrutinize Your Symptoms

While colds and allergies share some symptoms—sneezing and a runny and stuffy nose—other symptoms help distinguish one from the other. Cold symptoms can include a sore throat and general aches and pains. But allergies may cause wheezing and itchy, watery eyes.

Get a Definitive Diagnosis

In addition to analyzing your symptoms, there are other ways to determine what ails you. For

several weeks or months. If there’s still doubt as to what’s making you suffer, see your doctor.

Take Action with Treatment

Once you know what you’re up against, it’s important to treat your symptoms properly. Besides being inconvenient, untreated allergy

Prevention is the Best Medicine

Here’s how you can head off allergies and colds at the pass:

Colds:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and hot water.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Disinfect commonly used surfaces.
- Use paper towels instead of cloth.

Allergies:

- During warm months, keep your windows closed and air conditioning on.
- Use a quality air filter to keep out pollen.
- Bathe indoor pets regularly.
- Wash your hair every day.
- Wash your clothes in hot water.

Alleviate your allergy symptoms by taking over-the-counter or prescription antihistamines and decongestants and by using nasal steroids. Always talk to your doctor before using a medication or a combination of medications for the first time. ●

Source: National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases

A Stroke of Prevention

It's not too late to protect yourself

Nearly 700,000 Americans suffer strokes each year. Don't become one of them by ignoring the risk factors. Protect yourself with this advice from the American Stroke Association:

Control your blood pressure. Talk to your doctor about what your numbers should be and have your blood pressure checked regularly. Eat a healthy diet and take blood pressure-lowering medication, if necessary.

Quit smoking. Cigarette smoke reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood and causes damage to your arteries. Quitting can slow

and even reverse the harmful effects—no matter how long you've smoked.

Manage your diabetes. Diabetes puts you at greater risk for stroke. Be physically active every day and control your blood glucose levels.

Lower high cholesterol. High cholesterol increases the likelihood of developing heart disease, and heart disease is a risk factor for stroke. Talk to your doctor about lowering your cholesterol count.

The Cleveland Clinic and Lakewood and Marymount hospitals are certified by the Joint

Don't Delay If you experience sudden symptoms such as numbness—especially on one side of the body—confusion or difficulty speaking, dizziness or loss of balance, difficulty seeing or a severe headache, you may be having a stroke. Call 9-1-1 immediately.

Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations as Primary Stroke Centers. This means the hospitals have met strict national stroke care standards. Several other Cleveland Clinic hospitals are applying for certification. ●

You're Not Alone

Don't brave your diabetes by yourself. Seek support

Upon receiving a diagnosis of diabetes, you may feel overwhelmed and isolated. And while diabetes is a chronic condition, that doesn't mean it's not manageable.

The first thing you should do is educate yourself about the disease. Ask your doctor about enrolling in a diabetes education program. In addition to learning about the disease and how best to treat it, you'll discover how to keep your diabetes under control through a healthy diet and proper exercise and how to monitor your condition and recognize complications.

Besides arming yourself with knowledge, it's a good idea to surround yourself with support.

While your family and friends may empathize, they'll never know exactly what you are going through. That's why it's important to participate in a diabetes support group. Beyond gaining emotional support, you'll learn tips and coping techniques from others who share your condition, and you'll offer others help, too. Diabetes support groups



have even been found to help reduce stress, according to the American Diabetes Association.

To find a support group in your area, call **800/342-2383**. The Cleveland Clinic Health System and several of its hospitals offer diabetes management and education programs. Call your local Cleveland Clinic hospital for details. ●

Help at Home

Sometimes home is the best place to heal

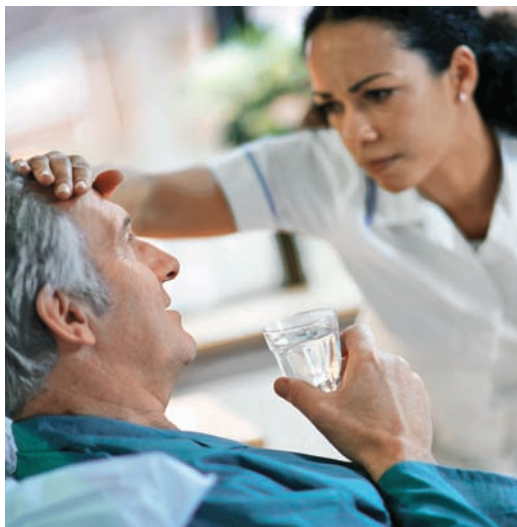
Like many people, you would probably prefer to recover from an illness or surgical procedure in the comfort and privacy of your own home. Medical research shows that when a skilled team of specialists provides home care, patients recover faster, have better outcomes and are more satisfied with the experience.

When choosing a home health care provider, the National Association for Home Care (nahc.org) recommends asking some key questions:

- Is it covered? Home health care is often covered by insurance providers as well as Medicare and Medicaid. Know what your insurance covers.
- How long has this provider been serving the community?
- What services are available?
- Are caregivers available 24/7?
- Does the provider bill directly to third-party payers?
- Is the provider accredited by a quality review organization, such as JCAHO (Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations)?

Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations)?

Cleveland Clinic Home Health provides services from skilled nursing care and physical therapy to home health aides. If you or a loved one could benefit from home health care, talk to a nurse, social worker or physician. Home health care must be ordered by a physician and certain criteria must be met. Call **216/444-HOME (4663)** or **800/263-0403** for more information or visit clevelandclinic.org/homecare. ●



Giving the Gift of Life

Organ Donation Awareness Month in April is a great reminder that individuals of all ages should consider themselves potential organ donors. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, about 74 people receive an organ transplant each day, yet 17 people die waiting for transplants due to a shortage of donated organs.

How You Can Help

You may think your organs are too old to help others, but did you know that you can also donate various tissues and bone marrow? Learn the facts about organ donation and get an organ donor card at organdonor.gov/signup1.html. You can also register as an organ donor with the Ohio Donor Registry, at the Bureau of Motor Vehicles, or contact LifeBanc at lifebanc.org or (toll-free) **888/558-5433**. Remember to let your family members and loved ones know your desire to be a donor. Your gift truly can save a life.

Are You Covered? As of January 1, 2006, everyone with Medicare—regardless of income, health status or prescription drug usage—now has access to prescription drug coverage. For a free fact sheet on the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plans, visit seniorcircleplus.org.

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