



# Your Guide To: Peripheral Arterial Disease



**CIS Houma**  
(985) 876-0300

**CIS Thibodaux**  
(985) 446-2021

**CIS Raceland**  
(985) 537-4000

**CIS Galliano**  
(985) 873-1685

**CIS Morgan City**  
(985) 385-6390

**CIS New Iberia**  
(337) 367-5200

**CIS Lafayette at  
Regional Medical Center**  
(337) 988-1585

**CIS at Lafayette General**  
(337) 289-8429

**CIS Crowley**  
(337) 788-2554

**CIS Opelousas**  
(337) 942-3006

**CIS Mamou**  
(337) 468-4010

**CIS Zachary**  
(225) 654-1559

**CIS Baton Rouge**  
(225) 308-0247

## What is peripheral artery disease (PAD)?

Peripheral artery disease refers to atherosclerosis in any area of the body other than the heart. Atherosclerosis is a build-up or blockage caused by hardening of the artery wall or fatty particles sticking to the artery wall.

Blockages are most commonly seen in the legs, however they sometimes occur in other areas including the kidney (renal), neck (carotid) and arms. These blockages are just as bad for your health as coronary artery disease (CAD). They rob your extremities/organs of oxygen rich blood.

## How is PAD diagnosed?

Some patients with PAD experience cramping in arms or legs while moving. This cramping is called claudication. Other patients have non-healing ulcers or gangrene. There are also some less-common symptoms that signal PAD. It is important to visit your physician early for proper diagnosis.

PAD is usually diagnosed by using physical exam, ultrasound or CT scans. All are simple procedures which are performed with minimal discomfort.

## What treatments are there for PAD?

The treatments for PAD are very similar to those used for coronary artery disease. They include:

### Percutaneous Transluminal Atherectomy (PTA)

PTA is commonly known as "the balloon". During this procedure, a catheter with a deflated balloon is inserted into an artery in the groin or elbow area. The catheter is advanced to the area of the blockage and the balloon is inflated in an attempt to flatten the blockage and open the artery. It may take more than one inflation or dilation to keep the vessel open.

### Stent

When the PTA alone is ineffective, a stent is sometimes used. The stent is a cylinder-shaped wire cage that is placed over the balloon catheter. The catheter is advanced to the point of blockage and the balloon is inflated, opening the stent. The balloon is deflated and removed while the stent is left behind. The artery wall eventually grows around the stent, keeping it in place. Your health care professional will decide which of the many stent types should be used for you.

### Bypass

When PAD is severe, a bypass may be necessary. A bypass is an alternate route through which blood can flow. Whenever possible, this alternate route is created with a section of your own vein. Donor or synthetic veins can be used if needed. Multiple bypasses are sometimes required to restore blood flow. This treatment varies greatly according to the specifics of each case.

## Are there other conditions that must be treated first?

Because PAD is often related to age, smoking, diet and exercise habits, patients with peripheral artery blockages may also have diabetes, kidney disorders, or blockages in the arteries leading to the heart or brain. These are all conditions that must be addressed before PAD is treated. For this reason, it is very important that you speak with your health care provider about all of the symptoms you are experiencing so that proper medical action can be taken.

## Are there any risks in the treatment of PAD?

The non-surgical treatment of vascular blockages are described in this brochure has, in many cases saved limbs and lessened pain. However, they are not performed without some significant risk. Your health care provider can offer more information and answer your questions or concerns.

