



Understanding Vascular Disease



The Ohio State University Heart and Vascular Center



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER





What Is Vascular Disease?

The vascular system is the body's network of blood vessels. It includes the arteries, veins and capillaries that carry blood to and from the heart. Problems of the vascular system are common and can be serious.

Vascular disease includes atherosclerosis—also called hardening of the arteries—in which arteries become thick and stiff. Blood clots can clog vessels and block blood flow to the heart or brain. Weakened blood vessels can burst, causing bleeding inside the body.

The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center Integrated Vascular Center is a leader in providing central Ohio with expert vascular treatment. Common vascular conditions we treat include:

- Peripheral artery disease, affecting blood vessels mostly in the legs and feet
- Aortic aneurysm, a weakening or bulging of the aorta, the vessel that transports blood from the heart to the rest of the body
- Carotid artery disease in the neck
- Deep vein thrombosis, a blood clot in a deep vein, most often in the lower leg or thigh



Risk Factors for Vascular Disease

You're more likely to have vascular disease as you get older, especially after age 70. Other factors that make vascular disease more likely include:

- Family history of vascular or heart diseases
- Pregnancy
- Illness or injury
- Long periods of sitting or standing still
- Any condition that affects the heart and blood vessels, such as diabetes, high blood pressure or high cholesterol
- Smoking
- Obesity

When to Seek Treatment or a Second Opinion

Vascular disease is often referred to as a silent threat because the symptoms of vascular disease may be sudden or may not present themselves at all. If you have any of the risk factors, talk with your physician or call our Heart and Vascular Center to request an evaluation.

Symptoms of Vascular Disease

Symptoms vary according to where blockages or weakness occur in the blood vessels.

Head or neck:

Signs of stroke, resulting from blocked carotid arteries in the neck:

- Weakness, tingling or numbness on one side of the body
- Inability to control movement of one or more limbs
- Loss of vision in one eye
- Slurred speech or loss of ability to speak

Even if these symptoms resolve quickly, they may indicate a strong possibility of a stroke. If you experience any of these symptoms, contact your physician or call 911 immediately.

Chest or abdomen:

- Mass in the abdomen
- Pulsating in your abdomen (similar to a heartbeat)
- Stiff or rigid abdomen
- Sudden, intense pain in your abdomen or lower back (may signify an aneurysm that is about to rupture; seek immediate medical care)

A ruptured aneurysm is very dangerous and requires emergency medical care. Symptoms of a ruptured aneurysm include:

- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Drop in blood pressure
- Increased heart rate
- Pain

Leg or foot:

- Leg pain that occurs with walking and clears when stopping may be an early sign of Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD). Pain that doesn't stop suggests a more severe condition that needs immediate attention
- Foot or toe wounds that won't heal or heal slowly
- Marked decrease in temperature of your lower leg or foot compared to the rest of the body
- Pain, warmth, swelling and skin discoloration from a deep vein clot
- Sores, discoloration or pain on your feet

Treatment

For all types of vascular disease, Ohio State's medical team first guides you toward healthy lifestyle choices that can stop or slow the effects of diseased blood vessels. Our physicians provide a range of options for medicines that lower blood pressure, cholesterol and the risk of blood clots.

For more advanced disease, minimally invasive procedures or vascular surgery may be required to open arteries and restore blood flow. Ohio State has a dedicated team of skilled interventional cardiologists and vascular surgeons to offer even the most complex surgical procedures.



Why Choose Ohio State?

Regional leader. Ohio State Wexner Medical Center is a leader in the care of patients with vascular diseases, performing hundreds of vascular procedures each year. Our highly specialized procedures and advanced techniques make us a regional referral center for patients who come to us from all parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Indiana, Kentucky and the Midwest.

Team approach. At the Ohio State Integrated Vascular Center, you benefit from the coordination of experts in all fields of vascular care—from diagnosis and management of vascular disease to complex surgeries and treatments not offered elsewhere in the area.

Clinical trials. As a patient at the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center, you benefit from our innovative research and access to the newest technologies and treatments available. For example, we are participating in national clinical trials to help direct the development of the next generation of stent grafts.

Vascular emergency care. If you have a life-threatening heart or vascular condition, Ohio State is home to the state's first Level One Heart and Vascular Emergency program, which mobilizes a team to provide immediate care for vascular emergencies.

Specialty center for aortic aneurysms. Our Aortic Center offers multidisciplinary team care for patients with aortic aneurysms in the chest and abdomen.

Carotid artery care. Our skilled physicians perform surgery as well as minimally invasive procedures to treat all stages of carotid artery disease. We place great importance on educating you about lifestyle habits and medications that may keep the disease from progressing.

Limb Preservation Program. Our Limb Preservation Program features highly trained experts dedicated to healing wounds, saving limbs and preventing amputation.

State-of-the-art testing. To pinpoint a blood clot, aneurysm or other vascular problem, the Ohio State Peripheral Vascular Laboratory features full-service diagnostic testing. The lab is accredited by the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission for vascular testing, an independent organization that sets the highest standards for quality health care.

Contact Us

To learn more about the Ohio State Wexner Medical Center's vascular services or to request an evaluation, call **614-293-ROSS (7677)**.





World-Class Care

The Ohio State Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital is central Ohio's only hospital to earn a spot on the *U.S. News & World Report* list of the nation's best hospitals for cardiology and heart surgery.

The Ohio State Ross Heart Hospital opened in 2004 as the nation's first comprehensive academic hospital dedicated to cardiovascular care. The 150-bed facility combines the latest technology with patient-focused care to create the best possible healing environment. Each floor is

dedicated to a specific service, including our fifth floor that's dedicated to vascular care. Our universal patient rooms adapt to changing medical needs so a patient can remain in the same private room for the entire hospitalization.

The Ross Heart Hospital is recognized as a Magnet® Hospital for nursing excellence by the American Nurses Credentialing Center. It was also awarded the Beacon Award for Excellence, recognized as having one of the best critical care units in the nation by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses.