

New Year's Resolutions that Can Reduce Your Risk of Heart Attack and Stroke

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Looking forward to a happy, healthy 2011? If you are over 50 or have Diabetes, you may want to make some special resolutions this year. Here are 5 New Year's resolutions that can help you lower your risk for life-threatening Peripheral Arterial Disease (P.A.D.):

1. If you smoke, lower your tobacco use- or better yet, quit smoking completely. Smoking is one of the top risk factors for P.A.D. because it leads to both constriction of blood vessels and more rapid buildup of plaque in arteries.
2. Get more physical activity. A proper exercise program can help you control your blood glucose, cholesterol, blood pressure and body weight. All of these are important factors in preventing Peripheral Arterial Disease. Set up a plan to exercise at least 3 to 5 times per week for 30 minutes each day.
3. Control your cholesterol. High cholesterol levels lead to plaque buildup and hardening of the arteries. When arteries become hardened, they can slow down or block the blood flow to the legs. A diet that is low in saturated fats and high in fiber can make a big difference in your cholesterol level and risk for P.A.D.
4. Manage your blood pressure. High blood pressure can lead to damage of the blood vessel walls. Vessel walls become rough when damaged, which allows more buildup of plaque. Some simple ways to lower blood pressure include limiting sodium intake, reducing alcohol consumption and losing weight. There are also many medications that can help manage blood pressure. Follow up with your healthcare provider for yearly evaluation of blood pressure and general health.
5. If you have symptoms of P.A.D. (fatigue, leg pain, skin wounds or ulcers), discuss your symptoms with your healthcare provider and request information about being tested for P.A.D.. An early diagnosis can allow you to make the necessary lifestyle changes and help prevent a heart attack or stroke.

Peripheral Arterial Disease is a serious condition that affects millions of Americans and can lead to a much greater chance of death from a heart attack or stroke. However, with a few simple lifestyle changes, you can reduce your risk and ensure that you will have a happy and healthy year.

Click [here](#) to find a physician in your area to discuss your risk factors or information about the PADnet™+ test available in your area.

For more information about P.A.D. visit PADCoalition.org.
Medical Information Courtesy of P.A.D. Coalition.