NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme



Information for Primary Care

The NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme is being introduced gradually across England. Phased implementation commenced in March 2009 and it is anticipated that coverage across England will be achieved by March 2013.

Research has demonstrated that offering men ultrasound screening in their 65th year could reduce the rate of premature death from ruptured AAA by up to 50 percent.

The screening process

All men will automatically be invited for screening in the year they turn 65

Men who are older than 65, and who have not previously been screened or treated for an abdominal aortic aneurysm, will be able to opt-in through self referral direct to the screening programme

Men will receive an invitation leaflet with an appointment time three weeks in advance

If the man accepts the invitation an ultrasound scan of the abdomen is carried out and the aortic diameter measured

Results are provided verbally immediately after the scan and in the post shortly afterwards.

Structure and delivery

The NHS AAA Screening Programme will be coordinated and led nationally. Local screening services will be delivered by PCTs which will provide screening for their population in line with national quality standards and protocols.

Each area will have a local screening centre that will coordinate screening for the population and organise invitation letters, screening and surveillance clinics, results letters and referrals to their appropriate Vascular Network.

The local screening centre will ensure that GPs are informed when men from their practice have been screened and of the outcomes of their screen.

The Programme operates separately from the Vascular Risk Management Programme.

Prevalence

- Around 6,000 deaths each year in England and Wales from ruptured AAA
- Deaths from ruptured AAA account for around 2% of all deaths in men aged 65 and over
- Around 4 percent of men aged between 65 and 74 in England have an AAA (approx. 80,000 men)
- Vascular disease (including death from ruptured AAA) accounts for 40 percent of UK deaths
- Vascular disease is as common as cancer and heart disease.

Risk factors

- The main risk factors are age and being male; 95 percent of ruptured AAA occurs in men over 65
- The condition is six times more common in men than women
- Risk is increased by smoking, high blood pressure or through close family history.





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Result	Follow up	Primary Care			
Normal (960 in 1000 men)					
Aortic diameter Less than 3cm No aneurysm detected	No treatment or further scans required Man discharged from screening programme	GP informed of outcome by letter			

Small aneurysm (35 in 1000 men)

Aortic diameter measures: 3 to 4.4cm	Man		GP will be informed, by letter, of the outcomes of screening and appointment with nurse
	offered yearly surveillance	Hance with nurse practitioner/ vascular nurse offered at or before first surveillance nly scan	Review and prescribing of medication may be appropriate Patient may require regular blood pressure monitoring
4.5 to 5.4cm	Man offered three monthly surveillance		offered at or before first surveillance scan Steps patient can take who of the aneurysm: • Eat a healthy balanced of of fatty foods • Stop smoking

Large aneurysm (5 in 1000 men)

Aortic diameter 5.5cm or above	Man referred to consultant vascular surgeon within defined and agreed Screening Programme Vascular Network by screening programme manager	 GP informed by phone call/fax and then by letter Steps patient can take in advance of potential treatment: Eat a healthy balanced diet and reduce intake of fatty foods Stop smoking Maintain a healthy weight
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Non-visualised

Repeat scan required Man offered appointment at hospital medical imaging department	GP informed by letter
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Further information for men

- National leaflets all men invited will receive a copy of a national invitation leaflet. Men who have a small or large aneurysm detected will also be provided with national information leaflets.
- Local AAA screening centre men will find the phone number for their local screening centre on their invitation and follow-up letters.
- NHS AAA Screening Programme aaa.screening.nhs.uk
- The Circulation Foundation a charity that supports people with vascular diseases www.circulationfoundation.org.uk or 020 7304 4779

Further information for health professionals

- NHS AAA Screening Programme the programme's website provides further information for health professionals including details of pilot studies and the evidence base for AAA screening. Copies of patient leaflets can also be downloaded from the professionals' area. See <u>aaa.screening.nhs.uk/professionals</u>
- Speak to your local AAA screening programme coordinator.





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