

Your screening result: you
have a large abdominal
aortic aneurysm (AAA)



What happens now?

Who is this leaflet for?

This leaflet provides information for men who have had a **large aneurysm** found through abdominal aortic aneurysm screening (also called AAA screening).

When you were screened we found that your aorta is much wider than normal. This means that you have a large abdominal aortic aneurysm that may need treatment – usually surgery. Around 1 in 1,000 men who are screened have a large AAA. We will now arrange an appointment for you to see a specialist for further tests and to talk about possible treatment.

What is an abdominal aortic aneurysm?

The aorta is the main blood vessel that supplies blood to your body. It runs from your heart down through your chest and abdomen.

In some people, as they get older, the wall of the aorta in the abdomen can become weak. It can then expand and form what is called an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

Is a large AAA serious?

A large aneurysm can be very serious because as the wall of the aorta stretches, it becomes weaker and can burst, causing internal bleeding. This is a medical emergency. Around 85 out of 100 people die when an aneurysm bursts.

The risk of a large AAA bursting is generally much greater than any risks from surgery to repair the aneurysm.

What happens next?

We have passed your details to a specialist vascular team who will give you an appointment in the next two weeks. The specialists:

- will ask you about your medical history
- will carry out a full examination
- may arrange further tests on your heart, lungs and kidneys to assess your general health
- will talk to you about the benefits and risks of treatment
- will answer any questions you have

We will tell your GP the result of your scan.

Are there any risks in having an operation?

Treatment for aneurysms that are found using screening is usually very effective.

However, all operations have risks and around 1 in 60 people die after surgery to repair an AAA. When you see the specialist vascular team, they will talk to you about treatment and the possible risks.

Do I have to have an operation?

The specialist will talk to you about the right treatment for you. In a small number of men surgery may have very high risks or may not be possible. This might be if you have other serious medical conditions. In some cases, where the medical condition will not improve, surgery may not be suitable.

Having an operation is your choice. If you do not have an operation, the specialist team will talk to you about other options.

How can I look after my health?

Here are some things you can do:

- if you are a smoker, seek help to try to cut down or stop

- make sure your blood pressure is normal. If you have not had it checked recently, it is worth getting it checked
- eat a healthy, balanced diet and cut down on fatty food
- if you are overweight, try to lose weight
- take regular exercise
- if you drink alcohol, keep within sensible limits

You do not need to make any other changes to your lifestyle and should continue with any sports or hobbies.

Your GP practice will be able to give you advice on all of the above and may also want to give you medication or review your current medication.

What about close family?

The risk of having an AAA increases if your brother, sister or parent has, or has had, an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

You should therefore inform any brothers, sisters or children that your AAA means that they are also at risk. They can ask their GP about the possibility of requesting a scan at an age five years earlier than the age at which your AAA was found.

Will I feel unwell?

If you have an aneurysm, you will not generally notice any symptoms, so it is unlikely that you will feel any pain or discomfort from a large aneurysm.

If you go into hospital for any reason, you should let the staff know that you have an abdominal aortic aneurysm found through screening.

If you have questions about your screening result, you can phone your local screening programme. If you feel generally unwell, you should speak to your GP.

What are the symptoms of a burst aneurysm?




It is important that you are aware of any symptoms of a burst AAA.

If you have **new symptoms of severe, persistent abdominal and/or lower back pain**, you should seek immediate medical help through an accident and emergency department. Make sure you tell any medical staff that you have an AAA.




If you have questions about your test result, you can phone your local screening programme. If you feel generally unwell, you should speak to your GP.

What about driving?

Car drivers:

-  You must inform the DVLA if your aneurysm grows to 6cm.
-  Your licence will be suspended if your aneurysm grows to 6.5cm.
-  Your licence will be reinstated after your aneurysm has been successfully treated.

Bus, coach and lorry drivers:

-  You must inform the DVLA that you have an aneurysm.
-  Your licence will be suspended
-  Your licence will be reinstated after your aneurysm has been successfully treated.

What about health-related insurance?

If you declare your AAA when applying for travel or any other health-related insurance you may be charged an additional premium or have the condition excluded from cover. When looking for cover, a broker can help. The British Insurance Brokers Association operates a 'find a broker' service. Visit www.biba.org.uk or call 0870 950 1790.

Where can I find more information?

- your local screening programme
- **www.nhs.uk/aaa**
- **www.circulationfoundation.org.uk**

You can also speak to your GP practice.



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Public Health England supports the UK National Screening Committee and is responsible for the NHS Screening Programmes