

What is Chronic Vascular Disease?

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Chronic vascular disease is a condition that implies long term damage, deterioration or destruction to the blood vessels in the body. Vascular disease may be defined in hundreds of medical conditions, including chronic venous insufficiency, peripheral artery disease and varicose veins. Understanding the basics of chronic vascular disease encourages individuals to be more aware of their body, normal versus abnormal function, and the importance of seeking immediate treatment when he or she notices something wrong.

Description

- Vascular disease is medically defined as interrupted blood flow to any part of the body. The body contains arteries, which carry oxygenated blood from the heart, or veins, which carry de-oxygenated blood back to the heart. Any disease or damage that affects the circulation of oxygenated and de-oxygenated blood to or from the heart is considered a vascular disorder. Long term conditions are defined as chronic.

Causes

- Vascular disease may be caused by an accumulation of fatty deposits or cholesterol in the blood vessels. Peripheral artery disease is one of these conditions, caused by blockage of arteries. Renal artery disease is also a chronic condition that is caused by blockage of the arteries as well as congenital and abnormal growth and development of renal or kidney and urinary system vessels. Other chronic vascular conditions such as varicose veins are caused by faulty valves found in the veins that regulate blood flow. Hypertension, high-fat diets and smoking are also causes of some chronic vascular conditions such as aneurysms.

Treatment

- Changes in lifestyle, such as quitting smoking, getting more exercise and following a nutritious and balanced diet may help some chronic vascular disease processes such as peripheral artery disease. Medications may be offered depending on the case to help improve and protect heart function. Medications to help prevent blood clots such as anticoagulants or blood thinners are often prescribed in those diagnosed with chronic vascular disease.

Symptoms

- Depending on the condition, multiple symptoms may present with chronic vascular disease. For example, some of the most common symptoms of cardio myopathy, or abnormal size of the heart mass, is shortness of breath, as blood is not being properly oxygenated, and chest pain (angina pectoris). A deep vein thrombosis (blood clot) may present with swelling and pain in the lower extremities, while carefully monitoring blood pressure is also a good indication of abnormal circulation issues.

Risks

- Family history, race, gender and age often determine our physical makeup, and are factors we can't change, but we do have control of some of the external causes of the development of a chronic vascular disease. Some of the risks we can control include smoking, cholesterol and obesity. Screening

tests often detect early vascular disease through the use of chest x-rays, stress tests, ultrasounds and blood work diagnostics.