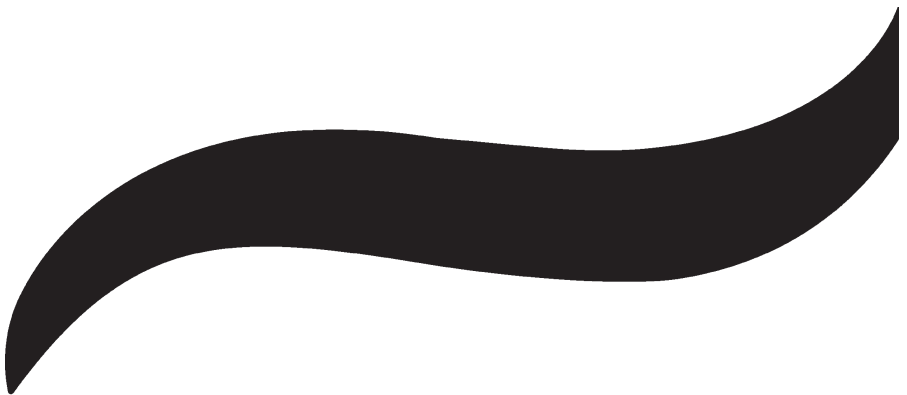




Intermittent Claudication

Community Claudication Clinic
Information for patients



WHAT IS INTERMITTENT CLAUDICATION?

Intermittent Claudication is a symptom of Peripheral Arterial Disease (PAD). Your arteries narrow or become blocked because of a build up of fatty material or plaque in the artery walls; this is a bit like a build up of limescale in a water pipe. This reduces the amount of blood that can pass through your arteries to provide oxygen to the muscles in your legs.

WHAT CAUSES INTERMITTENT CLAUDICATION?

We know that smoking tobacco is a significant factor that can cause Intermittent Claudication. Other medical conditions that can contribute are diabetes and high blood pressure. Being overweight can also be a contributing factor.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms are usually brought on through walking and exercise. Lactic acid builds up in your muscles during walking which will cause your muscles to cramp.

Most people who are affected by this will feel discomfort or pain when walking. Some people describe their legs feeling sore or heavy and usually experience discomfort or pain in the calves of their legs, but may also feel this in their thighs and buttocks. It usually settles shortly after you stop and rest.

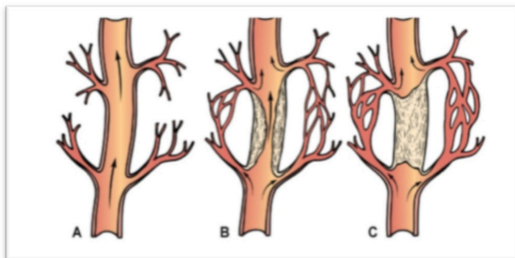
WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Most patients with Intermittent Claudication will get better by making simple changes to their lifestyle. This is because the human body is very good at recovering and repairing itself. The main ways you can help your body are by:-

- ❖ Exercising
- ❖ Stopping Smoking
- ❖ Taking prescribed Medication
- ❖ Maintaining a Healthy Body Weight

EXERCISE

Your doctor, nurse, podiatrist or physiotherapist may ask you to make changes to your lifestyle. This will include doing more walking and more exercise. Walking and exercise are essential to help new arteries develop (this is called Collateral Circulation-see Fig A-C) as well as increasing the stamina of your muscles and your general well being. Walking is the cheapest and best exercise; however exercise classes are available at sports centres throughout Lanarkshire and you can be referred to these by your doctor, nurse, podiatrist or physiotherapist.



Figures A-C Collateral circulation with new blood vessels developing around the blockage

STOPPING SMOKING

You will definitely be advised to stop smoking. This is because smoking continues to cause further damage to the arteries and stops new arteries from forming and opening up the collateral circulation. Tobacco also contains many harmful chemicals that continue to damage your heart and lungs making it more difficult for you to get fresh oxygen into your body and your muscles. There is assistance available to help you stop smoking from your local Health Centre, Chemist and Smoking Cessation Clinics. The help available includes nicotine patches, nicotine spray, inhalators and medication as well as group sessions and one-to-one support. The Stop Smoking Advisors will also test the carbon monoxide levels in your breath to monitor progress and help keep you motivated.

MEDICATION

As well as stopping smoking and exercising your doctor may also suggest taking a Statin. This is a drug that reduces the amount of cholesterol in your blood – cholesterol is the main cause of the build up of fatty material. Your doctor may also prescribe a drug such as Aspirin or Clopidogrel to reduce the chance of clots developing and to help make the blood thinner. It is also really important to take any blood pressure medication that you have received from your doctor as high blood pressure can also cause further damage to your arteries.

BODY WEIGHT AND DIET

It is also really important to try to eat a healthy diet.

Fruit and vegetables - You should aim to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables per day. These can be fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juice. You should try to plan your meals and try to eat a variety of different types of food.

Lean meat and fish - It is also a good idea to trim off any visible fat from meat and to remove the skin from chicken. You should also try to include two portions of fish per week. If possible one of which should be an oily fish e.g. mackerel, sardines, trout or tuna. You should also avoid frying food as much as possible.

Reduce sugar - It is very important to reduce sugar and saturated fats as these can contribute to a higher cholesterol level.

Avoid saturated fats - Butter and lard and are usually found in food such as pastries, cakes and biscuits. You should try to use sunflower oil or spreads or olive oil instead.

Low fat dairy - Dairy foods like milk, yoghurt or cheese are very important for healthy bones but you should try to use lower fat versions where possible e.g. skimmed or semi- skimmed milk and low fat cheese and yoghurt

Snacking - When you do manage to stop smoking it is really important to be careful that you don't replace your craving for tobacco with food by snacking and putting on more weight.



CHECKING FOR INTERMITTENT CLAUDICATION

There are tests that can be done to find out the extent of your disease. The test that is usually carried out is called an ABPI (Ankle Brachial Pressure Index) this involves taking the blood pressure in your legs much like taking a blood pressure in your arm; this is usually carried out in a Claudication Clinic by treatment room nurses. This gives the nurse a reading that can indicate if you have this condition. If there are any concerns or doubts about your condition you may be referred onto a Vascular Surgeon for further assessment. Most people do not need to see the Vascular Surgeon as the condition can be managed and improved by following the steps in the “What can be Done?” section. Even if you are referred to a Vascular Surgeon it does not mean that you will need an operation.

Signs that your condition may be getting worse are:

- ❖ Cold or numb toes or feet
- ❖ Loss of hair from your feet toes or legs
- ❖ Sores on your toes feet or legs that won't heal
- ❖ More intense pain when walking
- ❖ Pain at a shorter distance or taking longer to go away
- ❖ Pain in bed at night or having to hang your foot out of the bed
- ❖ Pain when you are resting
- ❖ You should contact your Healthcare Professional if you are worried

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO STOP SMOKING

- ❖ Within 20 minutes: blood pressure and heart rate return to normal
- ❖ After 1 hour: Circulation improves, hands and feet become warmer
- ❖ After 8 hours: Oxygen in blood returns to normal
- ❖ After 24 hours: Lungs begin to work better, carbon monoxide removed from the body
- ❖ Within 48 hours: Nerve endings start to re-grow. Ability to taste and smell improved.
- ❖ Within 72 hours: Bronchial tubes relax, making breathing easier. Lung capacity increases. Energy levels increase.
- ❖ Between 2 weeks and 3 months: Lung function is increased by up to 30%
- ❖ Within 2-3 months: Walking is easier
- ❖ Between 1 month and 9 months: Risk of heart attack, cancer and other smoking related diseases are reduced. Lungs become cleaner. Overall body energy levels increase
- ❖ After 5 years: Risk of stroke returns to normal. Lung cancer death rate decreases
- ❖ After 10 years: Reduced risk of other cancers (mouth, oesophagus, bladder, kidney, pancreas)
- ❖ After 15 years: Risk of coronary heart disease and death are the same as a non-smoker

Quit Your way:

Online: www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

Telephone: 0800848484

Keep Well Services:

Online: www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk

Telephone: 01698 754260

email: keepwell.lanarkshire@nhs.scot

Get Walking Lanarkshire:

Online: www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/getwalking

Telephone: 07903358424

Weigh to go:

Online: www.slleisureandculture.co.uk

www.nlleisure.co.uk

Telephone: 01236 341969 option 3

My Diabetes My Way:

Online: <http://www.mydiabetesmyway.scot.nhs.uk/>

British Dietetic Association Food Fact Sheet:

Online: <https://www.bda.uk.com>

NICE Guidelines:

Online: <https://www.nice.org.uk>

SIGN Guidelines:

Online: <http://sign.ac.uk>

NORTH LANARKSHIRE LEISURE CENTRES

Airdrie

John Smith Pool, telephone: 01236 750130

Airdrie Leisure Centre: 01236 341956

Bellshill

Sir Matt Busby Sports Centre, telephone: 01698 747466

Coatbridge

Time Capsule, telephone 01236 449572

Cumbernauld

Tryst Sports Centre, telephone 01236 341960

Kilsyth Swimming Pool, telephone 01236 341594

Motherwell

Aquatec, telephone 01698 640790

Wishaw

Shotts Leisure Centre, telephone 01501 823333

Wishaw Leisure Centre, telephone 01698 640794

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE LEISURE CENTRES

Clydesdale

Carluk Leisure Centre, telephone 01555 751384

Lanark Leisure Centre, telephone 01555 666800

East Kilbride

John Wright Sports Centre, telephone 01355 237731

Dollan Aqua Centre, telephone 01355 260000

Hamilton

Hamilton Water Palace, telephone 01698 459950

South Lanarkshire Lifestyle – Fairhill, telephone 01698 456350

Blantyre Leisure Centre, telephone 01698 727800

Larkhall Leisure Centre, telephone 01698 881742

Rutherglen

South Lanarkshire Lifestyle – Eastfield, telephone 0141 642 9500

Strathaven

Strathaven Leisure Centre, telephone 01357 522820

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NHS Lanarkshire General
Enquiry Line: 0300 30 30 243

NHS inform - The national health information service for Scotland.
www.nhsinform.co.uk
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

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