

VASCULAR SURGERY

Deep dive into the vessels

Our bodies rely on a vast network of blood vessels but few people truly understand how they function.



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VASCULAR DISEASE

The vascular system comprises the entire network of blood vessels in the body, namely, the arteries, veins and capillaries. These vessels carry blood to and from the heart. Those called arteries carry oxygenated blood from the heart to every part of the body, while veins carry blood back to the heart.

Vascular diseases are abnormal conditions of the blood vessels. Problems affecting them can have severe medical consequences, including disability or death. Examples of vascular diseases include:

Aortic aneurysm An abnormal ballooning of the largest artery in the body, the aorta – which can rupture and cause death.

Peripheral arterial disease Commonly seen in diabetics and smokers in which the leg arteries are narrowed or blocked by cholesterol deposits that cause pain; results in gangrene and amputation if left untreated.

Carotid artery disease Presents as narrowing of the neck carotid arteries that form the main blood supply to the brain; results in stroke.

Venous disease A large group of diseases including deep vein thrombosis, varicose veins and deep vein insufficiency or failure; results in leg swelling, skin itching and discolouration, and non-healing ulcers.

Vascular malformations An abnormal collection of blood vessels that can be found in various parts of the body including the face, limbs, trunk, brain, intestines and organs; can grow into a large section of



WHAT A VASCULAR SURGEON DOES

He manages and treats vascular conditions on nearly all the arteries and veins of the body, using different approaches, such as medical therapy, minimally-invasive and traditional open surgical reconstruction procedures.

tissue which causes compression of surrounding tissues; can bleed spontaneously or be physically disfiguring.

Vascular surgery

This is the diagnosis, management and treatment of conditions affecting the blood vessels. Traditionally, much of vascular surgery was done through open surgical reconstruction and techniques which were sometimes associated with significant morbidity and mortality. Today however, technological advances in vascular diagnostics and therapy have led to an increasing

number of vascular disorders being detected and treated earlier.

More specifically, the field of endovascular surgery – in which wires, catheters and stents are inserted through small artery/vein punctures – has made interventions safer and less traumatic for patients, and recovery much faster.

See a vascular surgeon

The following conditions call for a vascular surgeon's assessment:

- Aortic aneurysm or dissection of the chest, abdomen or pelvis
- Neck (carotid) artery narrowing
- Pain in the calf or thigh when walking
- Congenital vascular malformations of face, limbs and body
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure or kidney failure
- Ulcers or skin changes due to varicose veins
- Painful varicose veins
- Unexplained upper and lower limb swelling

These indicate possible disease in the blood vessels. Such conditions left untreated, require emergency care. 