



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



What happens now?

Who is this leaflet for?

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

Your AAA screening result

When you were screened we found that your aorta is **wider than normal**. This means that you have a medium abdominal aortic aneurysm.

- Small AAA: 3.0cm – 4.4cm
- **Medium AAA: 4.5cm – 5.4cm**
- Large AAA: 5.5cm or bigger

Around 1 in 500 men who are screened have a medium AAA. We will invite you back for an ultrasound scan every 3 months to see if it is enlarging.

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 medium AAA serious?

A medium AAA can become serious if it continues to enlarge, so it is important to monitor its size. If it enlarges to 5.5cm (large aneurysm) we will arrange for you to have an appointment with a specialist for further tests and to talk about possible treatment, usually an operation. A large aneurysm can be very serious because as the wall of the aorta stretches, it becomes weaker and could burst, causing internal bleeding.

Around 85 out of 100 people die when an aneurysm bursts.

Most aneurysms enlarge slowly, so you may never develop a large AAA that needs treatment.

What happens next?

-  We will invite you back for a scan in 3 months' time.
-  Just before your next scan is due, we will send you an appointment letter.
-  We will arrange for you to speak to a specialist nurse. They will be able to give you advice on your general health in relation to your aneurysm.

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.

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.

How many times will I need to come back?

Everyone is different, so it is not possible to say exactly how many scans you will need to come back for.

We will continue to invite you for a scan every three months unless your aorta increases to 5.5cm or wider. We would then arrange an appointment with a specialist for more tests and to talk about possible treatment.

Why can't I have an operation now?

All operations have risks and the operation for an abdominal aortic aneurysm is no different.

Research shows that an operation to treat a medium aneurysm has a higher risk of health problems than monitoring the aneurysm and only operating if it enlarges to 5.5cm or wider.

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 medium 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 test 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 extremely unlikely that a medium AAA will burst, but it is important that you are aware of any symptoms of a ruptured 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 screening 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 if your aneurysm grows to 5.5cm
-  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 0370 950 1790.

Where can I find more information?

- your local screening programme
- NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/aaa
- Circulation Foundation:
www.circulationfoundation.org.uk
- British Heart Foundation: www.bhf.org.uk

You can also speak to your GP practice.

Find out how Public Health England and the NHS use and protect your screening information at www.gov.uk/phe/screening-data.

To opt out of screening, see www.gov.uk/phe/screening-opt-out.

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