

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Statistics

- An abdominal aortic aneurysm is an enlargement or weak area in the main blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body.
- An abdominal aortic aneurysm is caused by a breakdown of the lining of the vessel. As the lining gets weaker, primarily due to age and other risk factors, the vessel wall becomes thinner and expands. This expansion is the aneurysm.
- Males are at least four times more likely to have an AAA than females.
- AAA is the 13th leading cause of death in the U.S. and the 10th leading cause of death in men over age 55
- Each year, about 15,000 Americans die of an abdominal aortic aneurysm.
- AAA's are generally silent until rupture at which time only 10-25% of affected individuals survive to hospital discharge following repair. This means that AAAs are 75-90% fatal.
- As many as 2 of 3 people with ruptured AAAs die before arriving at the hospital.
- Ultrasound has been demonstrated to be a sensitive and specific tool for AAA detection.
- Smoking is associated with a 3-5-fold increase in the risk of developing an AAA.
- Once discovered, an aneurysm is measured in diameter and carefully monitored. When it grows beyond five centimeters in size, the aneurysm is surgically removed.
- The vast majority of people who have an aneurysm have no symptoms. The most common symptoms are back pain, rigidity in the abdomen or tenderness in the abdomen.
- Risk factors include being male over the age of 55, a family history of AAAs, high blood pressure, smoking and obesity.

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