

The Basics of Critical Limb Ischemia (CLI)



Critical limb ischemia (CLI) is the advanced stage of peripheral artery disease (PAD), a progressive condition that occurs when there is significant blockage in the arteries.⁴ The blockage happens when the arteries become narrowed and hardened due to excessive plaque buildup and this can reduce important blood flow to the limbs.

CLI affects more than
2 million Americans



with more than **40%** of those undergoing a major amputation within **6 months of diagnosis.**³

The lack of blood flow can lead to severe pain in areas such as the legs and feet, even when at rest during the night. Sometimes, the reduction in blood flow is so bad that parts of the limbs are at risk of developing gangrene.

CLI is a serious condition and without proper and immediate treatment, people may risk amputation and serious health complications.^{1,5}

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Still want to learn more? You can find information about CLI symptoms, diagnosis, and treatments by visiting PVDandMe.com.



Patient
Stories



Help Finding
a Doctor

1. "Critical limb ischemia." UC Davis Vascular Center. n.d.
2. "Critical Limb Ischemia (CLI)." Division of Vascular and Endovascular Surgery. n.d.
3. "Amputation as a Last Resort." *EVToday*. Aug 2011.
4. Peacock et al. "The Incidence and Health Economic Burden of Ischemic Amputation in Minnesota, 2005-2008." *Prev Chronic Dis* 2011;8(6):A141.
5. Varu et al. "Critical limb ischemia." *Journal for Vascular Surgery*. Volume 51, Issue 1, Pages 230-241. Jan. 2010.

Disclaimer

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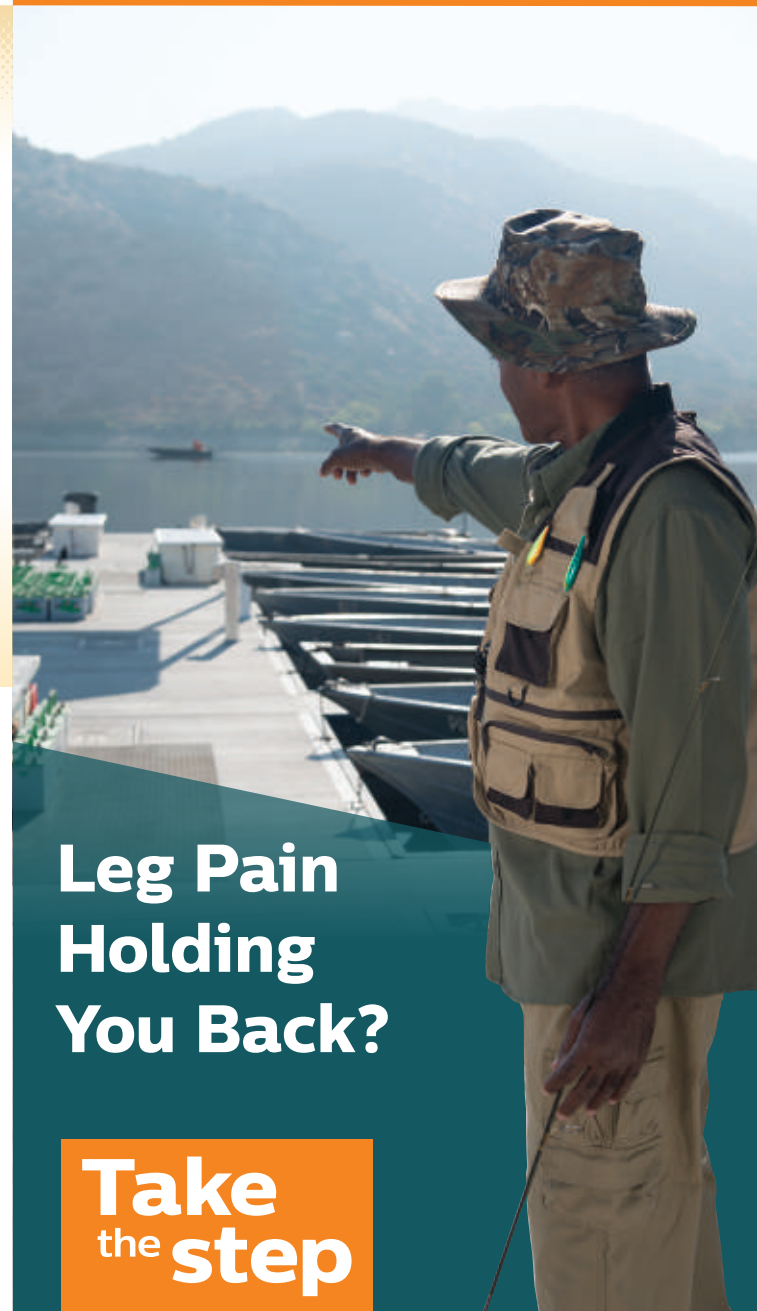
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CLI

Critical Limb Ischemia



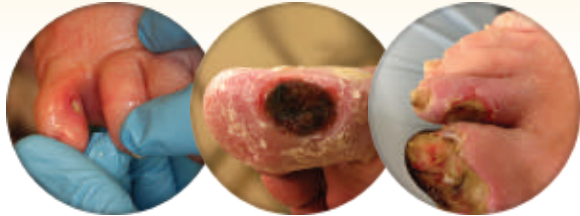
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Are you experiencing any of these symptoms of CLI?

Symptoms of CLI usually do not begin on their own. People may start out with mild aches such as sporadic leg pain while exercising, but as the disease progresses, the symptoms may become more and more severe. In fact, most people with CLI have a long history of worsening arterial disease, but may be unaware of how serious their condition has become.



So, what are some of the signs of CLI?¹

- Because CLI is the advanced stage of arterial disease, people may experience limited mobility
- Severe non-healing wounds can lead to gangrene or tissue loss
- Leg ulcers, or non-healing wounds, may also develop as the restricted blood flow damages tissue
- Severe pain that may occur during the night or without moving
- A weak pulse that may be hard to find in the legs and feet
- Temperature changes such as cold feet may become common
- Thickening of the toenails and shiny, dry skin

It is important to take the step to see your doctor if you think you may have CLI or have non-healing wounds so you can get immediate help.

What puts me at risk for CLI?



CLI affects more than 2 million Americans, or 12 percent of the adult population—with more than 40 percent of those undergoing a major amputation within six months of a diagnosis.³ Taking preventative measures to avoid CLI is important—and that begins with understanding the risk factors associated with the disease.

Like PAD, risk factors for CLI include:²

- **Certain medical conditions** such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes can increase the likelihood of developing arterial disease
- **Smoking**, which can damage the arteries and their ability to transport blood
- **Obesity or being overweight** can also put pressure on your legs and restrict healthy blood flow
- **Being older than 60** can increase the risk of developing arterial disease as blood vessels are more likely to become damaged over time
- **A family history of cardiovascular disease** is associated with higher rates of CLI
- **Inactive lifestyle and poor diet** can be a factor

CLI Diagnostic Procedures and Treatments

Getting help right away for CLI is critical. The disease can continue to progress and put you at risk for several complications and quality of life issues.

It is important to get screened—which can be simple and easy. Your physician will evaluate your medical and family history, take blood tests, and conduct a physical exam.

Your doctor may use a combination of diagnostic tools to confirm a diagnosis.

These tools may include:

- Ankle-brachial index
- Duplex ultrasound
- CTA angiography
- Transcutaneous pulse oximetry
- MRA angiography
- Intravascular ultrasound

If your doctor does diagnose you with CLI, here are some of the potential treatments that may be used to re-establish blood flow to the foot:

- Atherectomy
- Angioplasty with stent placement
- Bypass grafting

Appropriate wound care will also be required for any non-healing wounds.