



Pacific Cardiovascular Associates Medical Group

Ankle-brachial Index Test

What is an Ankle-brachial Index Test?

The ankle-brachial index test is a quick, noninvasive way to check your risk of peripheral artery disease (PAD). Peripheral artery disease is a condition in which the arteries in your legs or arms are narrowed or blocked. People with peripheral artery disease are at a high risk of heart attack, stroke, poor circulation and leg pain.

Your doctor may order this test if:

1. You have history of peripheral arterial disease
2. You experience leg pain at rest or while walking

How the test is performed:

This test is done by measuring blood pressure at the ankle and in the arm while person is at rest. Measurements are usually repeated at both sites after 4 minutes of toe raises.

The ankle-brachial index (ABI) result is used to predict the severity of peripheral arterial disease (PAD). A slight drop in your ABI with exercise means that you probably have PAD. This drop may be important, because PAD can be linked to a higher risk of heart attack or stroke.

Why the test is performed:

This test is done to screen for peripheral arterial disease of the legs. It is also used to see how well a treatment is working (such as medical treatment, an exercise program, angioplasty or surgery).

How you prepare:

Generally, you won't need to follow any special instructions before your appointment to have an ankle-brachial index test performed. You may want to wear loose, comfortable clothing that allows the technician performing your ankle-brachial index test to easily place a blood pressure cuff on your ankle and upper arm.

How long the test will take:

The test will take around 30-45 minutes

What to expect:

Having an ankle-brachial index test is painless and similar to getting your blood pressure taken in a routine visit to your doctor. You may feel some pressure on your arm or ankle when the cuff inflates to read your blood pressure.

You lie on a table on your back, and a technician measures your blood pressure in both your arms using an inflatable cuff. Then, the technician measures the blood pressure in two arteries in your leg near your ankles using the inflatable cuff and a hand-held Doppler ultrasound device.

Frequently Asked Questions

Are there any risks involved in this test?

There are no physical risks involved in an ankle-brachial index test. You may feel some discomfort when the blood pressure cuffs inflate on your arm and ankle, but this discomfort is temporary and should stop when the air is released from the cuff.

What is the cancelation policy if I cannot make my appointment?

If you are unable to make your appointment due to a bona-fide emergency no cancellation fee will apply provided you provide written documentation or proof of the emergency. In all other instances a \$50.00 no show/cancellation fee will be charged, without exception, for un-kept appointments not canceled 48 hours before the scheduled appointment time.