

Supporting the Health of Our Community

# care

MAY 2008

magazine®

*References and Options for Healthier Living*

**Put Your Best Face Forward**

**Stay Hip, Even After 80**

**Mother's Day the Natural Way**

**Balance Your Health with Diet**

**Increase Your Life's Odds  
by Reversing Health Risks**

- Regional Medical and Clinic Locator Listings
- Area Support Groups
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- Regional Blood Drives
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*Complimentary - Take Care Home with You*

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Supporting the Health of Our Community

VOLUME 10 ISSUE 5 MAY 2008

Publisher and Editor: Karen Mozzo

Website Manager: Stephanie Shelton

Distribution: John Lucas

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as a public service to support  
the health of this community**

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care magazine® is published by The Catalyst Media Group, Inc., P.O. Box 1515, Beaufort, SC 29901, and is distributed monthly to doctors' waiting rooms, dentists' offices, diagnostic centers, optical centers, outpatient facilities, pharmacies, grocery stores, health food stores, physiotherapy centers, exercise and weight loss centers, assisted living facilities and other related health-based businesses throughout the SC and GA Coastal/Lowcountry. Advertisers appearing within this issue have committed to support the production, printing and distribution of this public service magazine. Please support them.

Please email all community or health events, support group or professional information you wish to have included in our publication. Or, you may call then FAX to 843-524-8988. Inclusion is at Publisher's discretion. Closing for each issue is 20 days before scheduled distribution.

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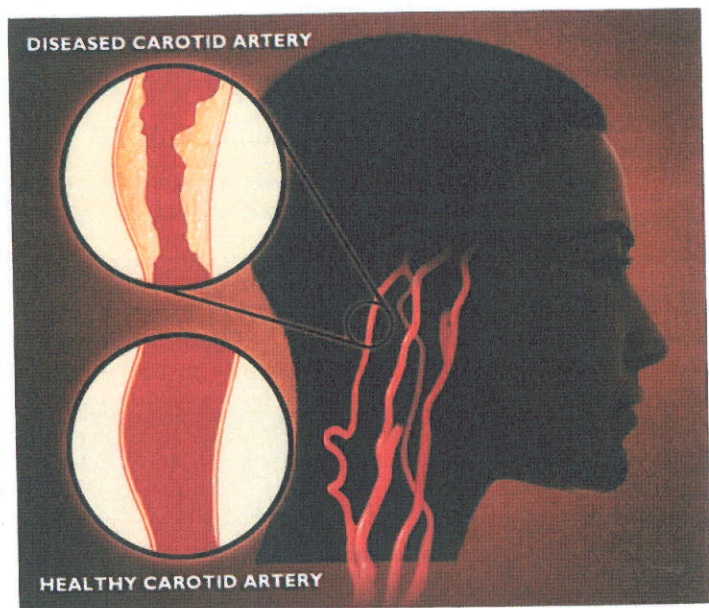
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# Preventive Health Screenings Important to Detect Disease

By Joelle M. Reizes, MA

Many think of heart disease as a condition seen mostly in men, but according to WomenHeart: the National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease, an estimated 8,000,000 American women are living with heart disease, and nearly 500,000 die each year from cardiovascular disease (CVD). As reported in an article published on CNN.com/Health, recent research indicates that more women under 45 are dying of heart disease from blocked arteries, while the death rate for men of the same age has leveled off.



Although these numbers are startling, there are options available to women to help them learn of their risk. One type of option is vascular screening. Painless, non-invasive, preventive ultrasound screenings can detect warning signs of vascular disease, yet many women do not even know that vascular screenings exist. They know about breast cancer screenings, but vascular screening has probably never crossed their minds.

Many forms of vascular disease present no symptoms, or only subtle ones, and hence are known as "silent killers."

Four frequent forms of vascular disease are:

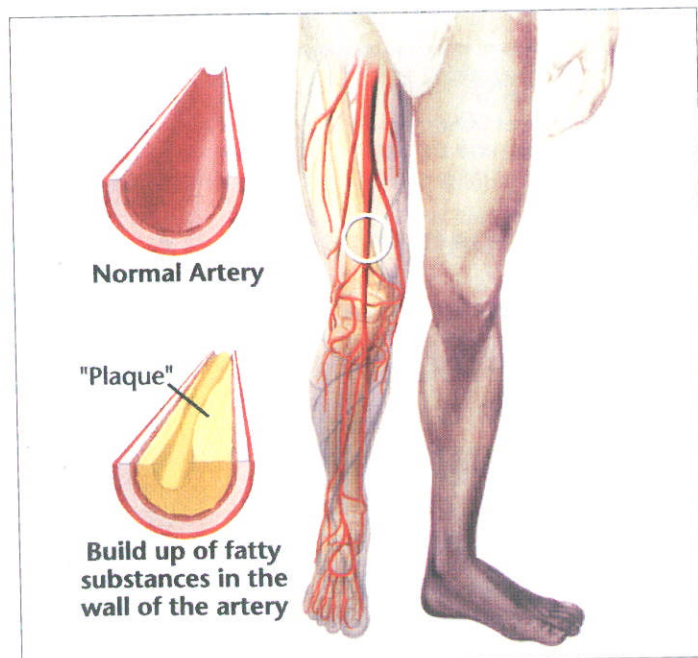
## 1. Carotid Artery Disease

Carotid artery disease causes more than half of all strokes in the U.S. The disease is characterized by a narrowing or blockage of one or both of the carotid arteries, located on each side of the neck, that bring vital oxygenated blood to the brain.

Carotid artery disease is caused by the build-up of plaque in the carotid arteries and can cause a stroke in one of two ways: blockage interrupts blood flow to the brain, or pieces of plaque or a blood clot break off from the wall of the carotid artery and travel to the brain.

## 2. Peripheral Arterial Disease

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) is a condition in which the arteries that carry blood to the arms or legs become narrowed or clogged by plaque

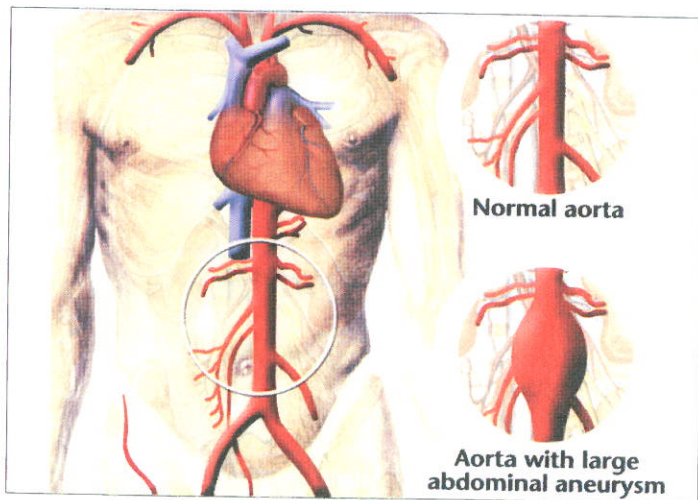


build-up. This interferes with the normal flow of blood, sometimes causing cramping pain during exercise, but often causing no symptoms at all.

Approximately 10 million Americans have PAD. The disease is most common in men and women over the age of 50.

### 3. Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm is an enlargement (bulge) or weak area in the lower portion of the aorta, the main artery that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body. An AAA grows silently, generally with no symptoms, but can rupture suddenly with catastrophic results. The mortality rate from a ruptured AAA is approximately 90 percent.



Smokers, and people with a history of smoking as few as 100 cigarettes, are at increased risk. AAA is the 13th leading cause of death in the U.S.

### 4. Atrial Fibrillation

Atrial fibrillation is the most common type of heart arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat). The condition occurs when the heart's upper chambers, the atria, beat irregularly and out-of-sync with the heart's ventricles or lower chambers. This out-of-sync beating hinders the heart from efficiently pumping blood through the heart.

Approximately 2.5 million Americans have atrial fibrillation, and the condition can be intermittent or chronic, symptomatic or asymptomatic. Individuals with atrial fibrillation have a five-fold increased stroke risk.

## Who's at Risk?

Vascular disease is found primarily in people age 50 and older, and risk increases with age

People most at risk have a family history, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, poor diets and/or sedentary lifestyles

Also at risk are current and former smokers, heavy alcohol consumers and the overweight

**Talk to your doctor about vascular screening. Preventive screenings for those who are at risk but are asymptomatic are generally not covered by insurance. However, convenient, hospital-quality screenings are available for an affordable price through Life Line Screening, the nation's leading provider of preventive health screenings. The screenings are completely painless. Life Line Screening works in collaboration with area churches and other community groups to provide screenings in local neighborhoods.**

For more information about these conditions, contact Life Line Screening at **1-800-697-9721** or visit them online at [www.lifelinescreening.com](http://www.lifelinescreening.com).

*Illustrations courtesy of LifeLine Screening.*

*Ms. Reizes is the Public Relations Director at Life Line Screening.*

## careTalk<sup>SM</sup>

*Wise words from Mrs. Nancy Ficnerski's Beaufort High School AP Language and Composition class*

**Medical Terms Defined by Etymology:**

### AMBULANCE

The term 'ambulance' was originally used to mean, "walking hospital." During the Crimean War, 'ambulance' changed from a "walking hospital" to "field hospital" or a "vehicle for conveying wounded from the field." Now ambulance is the term used for a motor vehicle that carries sick or injured people to the hospital.

*-Emily Duncan*