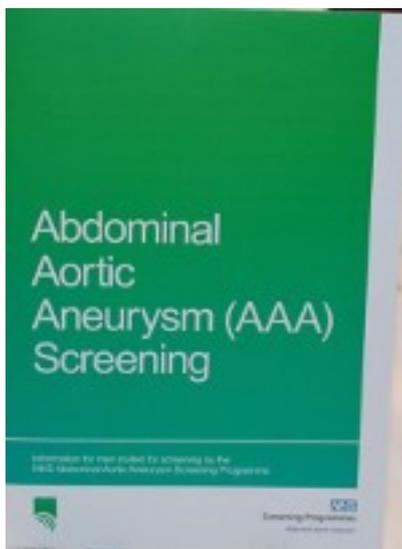


ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM (AAA) SCREENING



A small percentage of men over pension age develop a weakness in the wall of the aorta which is the main blood vessel supplying the body. In some cases this weakness results in a bulge in the blood vessel wall and if this bursts it can be very serious and probably fatal. This condition is known as an ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM, abbreviated to AAA by the medical profession. The good news is that there is a screening process available to men over 65 that is free on the NHS, painless, and takes only a few minutes. Men particularly at risk are those that smoke or have only recently stopped, those with high blood pressure, those with a history of AAA within their close family (parent, brother, sister).

All men are being invited for an AAA screening once they reach age 65. Those attending for a screening will go to a clinic within easy reach of their home address and once there they will be required to lift their shirt to bare their abdomen. No further undressing is required. An ultra sound machine will be used to carry out the examination of the aorta and this is painless and usually takes about 10 minutes. You will be told the result of your test immediately and your result will be sent to your GP. About 4% of men in the age group 65 to 74 have AAA. Some have only a small aneurysm and they will be invited to return for regular retests to monitor the size of the aneurysm. Only in the cases of large aneurysm will treatment be offered quickly and this can mean a surgical procedure. Treatment is very effective.

If you have not yet been invited for AAA screening by the NHS and you wish to have a test now, you may find information on aaa.screening.nhs.uk or by emailing aaa.screening@nhs.net. Alternatively you can approach your GP for information and advice.

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