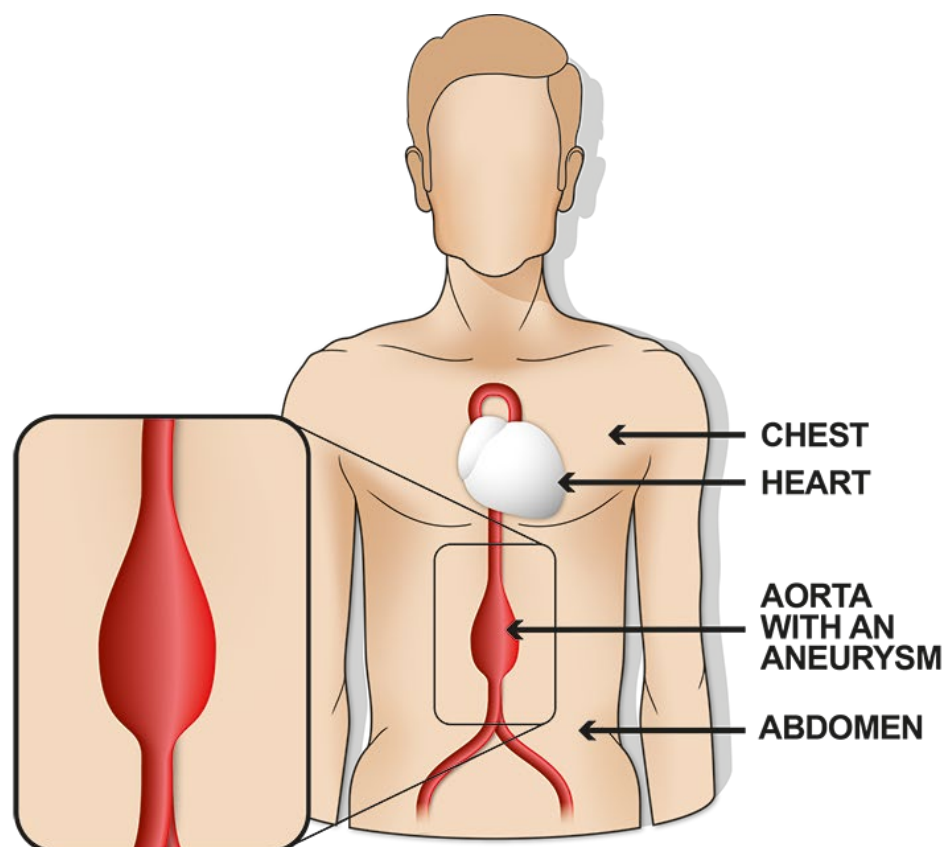


## Your screening results: you have a small abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA)

Public Health England (PHE) created this information on behalf of the NHS. In this information, the word 'we' refers to the NHS service that provides screening.



### Who this information is for

This information is for men who have had a **small aneurysm** found through abdominal aortic aneurysm screening (also called AAA screening).

When you were screened we found that your aorta is a little wider than normal. This means that you have a small abdominal aortic aneurysm.

- **Small AAA: 3.0cm to 4.4cm**
- Medium AAA: 4.5cm to 5.4cm
- Large AAA: 5.5cm or bigger

Around 1 in 80 men who are screened have a small AAA. We will invite you back for an ultrasound scan every 12 months to see if it is enlarging.

## **What an abdominal aortic aneurysm is**

The aorta is the main blood vessel that supplies blood to your body. It runs from your heart down through your chest and abdomen.

In some people, as they get older, the wall of the aorta in the abdomen can become weak. It can then expand and form what is called an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

## **How serious a small AAA is**

A small AAA is not serious. However, it is important to monitor the size of the aneurysm in case it gets bigger and develops into a large AAA.

A large aneurysm can be very serious because as the wall of the aorta stretches, it becomes weaker and could burst, causing internal bleeding. Around 85 out of 100 people die when an aneurysm bursts.

Most aneurysms enlarge slowly, so you may never develop a large AAA that needs treatment.

## **What happens next**

We will invite you back for a scan in 12 months' time. Just before your next scan is due, we will send you an appointment letter. We will arrange for you to speak to a specialist nurse. They will be able to give you advice on your general health in relation to your aneurysm.

## **Looking after your health**

You can help look after your health by:

- seeking help to try to cut down or stop smoking, if you are a smoker
- making sure your blood pressure is normal – if you have not had it checked recently, it is worth getting it checked
- eating a healthy, balanced diet and cutting down on fatty food
- trying to lose weight, if you are overweight
- taking regular exercise
- keeping within sensible limits, if you drink alcohol

You do not need to make any other changes to your lifestyle and should continue with any sports or hobbies.

Your GP practice will be able to give you advice on all of the above and may also want to give you medication or review your current medication.

## How often you need to come back

Everyone is different, so it is not possible to say exactly how many scans you will need to come back for.

We will continue to invite you for a scan every 12 months unless:

- your aorta increases to 4.5cm when we would invite you for a scan every 3 months
- a number of repeat scans show that your aorta is not increasing in size, meaning it is unlikely to cause any problems
- your aorta increases to 5.5cm or wider. We would then arrange an appointment with a specialist for more tests and to talk about possible treatment

## Why you cannot have an operation now

All operations have risks and the operation for an abdominal aortic aneurysm is no different.

Research shows that an operation to treat a small aneurysm has a higher risk of health problems than monitoring the aneurysm and only operating if it enlarges to 5.5cm or wider.

## Symptoms

If you have an aneurysm, you will not generally notice any symptoms, so it is unlikely that you will feel any pain or discomfort from a medium aneurysm.

If you go into hospital for any reason, you should let the staff know that you have an abdominal aortic aneurysm found through screening.

If you have questions about your screening result, you can phone your local screening programme. If you feel generally unwell, you should speak to your GP.

## Close family

The risk of having an AAA increases if your brother, sister or parent has, or has had, an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

You should therefore inform any brothers, sisters or children that your AAA means that they are also at risk. They can ask their GP about the possibility of requesting a scan at an age 5 years earlier than the age at which your AAA was found.

## Driving

Car drivers:

1. You must inform the DVLA if your aneurysm grows to 6cm.
2. Your licence will be suspended if your aneurysm grows to 6.5cm.
3. Your licence will be reinstated after your aneurysm has been successfully treated.

Bus, coach and lorry drivers:

1. You must inform the DVLA that you have an aneurysm.
2. Your licence will be suspended.
3. Your licence will be reinstated after your aneurysm has been successfully treated.

## Health-related insurance

If you declare your AAA when applying for travel or any other health-related insurance you may be charged an additional premium or have the condition excluded from cover. When looking for cover, a broker can help. The British Insurance Brokers Association operates a 'find a broker' service. Visit [their website](#) or call 0370 950 1790.

## More information

You can get more information at:

- your GP practice
- your local screening programme
- NHS.UK at [www.nhs.uk/aaa](http://www.nhs.uk/aaa)
- Circulation Foundation at [www.circulationfoundation.org.uk](http://www.circulationfoundation.org.uk)
- British Heart Foundation at [www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

The NHS Screening Programmes use personal information from your NHS records to invite you for screening at the right time. Public Health England also uses your information to ensure you receive high quality care and to improve the screening programmes. Find out more about how your information is used and protected, and your options at [www.gov.uk/phe/screening-data](http://www.gov.uk/phe/screening-data).

Find out how to opt out of screening at [www.gov.uk/phe/screening-opt-out](http://www.gov.uk/phe/screening-opt-out).

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