

# Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening

An **easy guide** about a health test for men who are 65 or older



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## Your choice



This leaflet tells you about a free NHS test you can have to check if you have a health problem called an abdominal aortic aneurysm or AAA.

The test is called AAA screening. It is for men who are 65 or older.

The test is simple and you get your results the same day.



You can choose if you want to have the test or not.

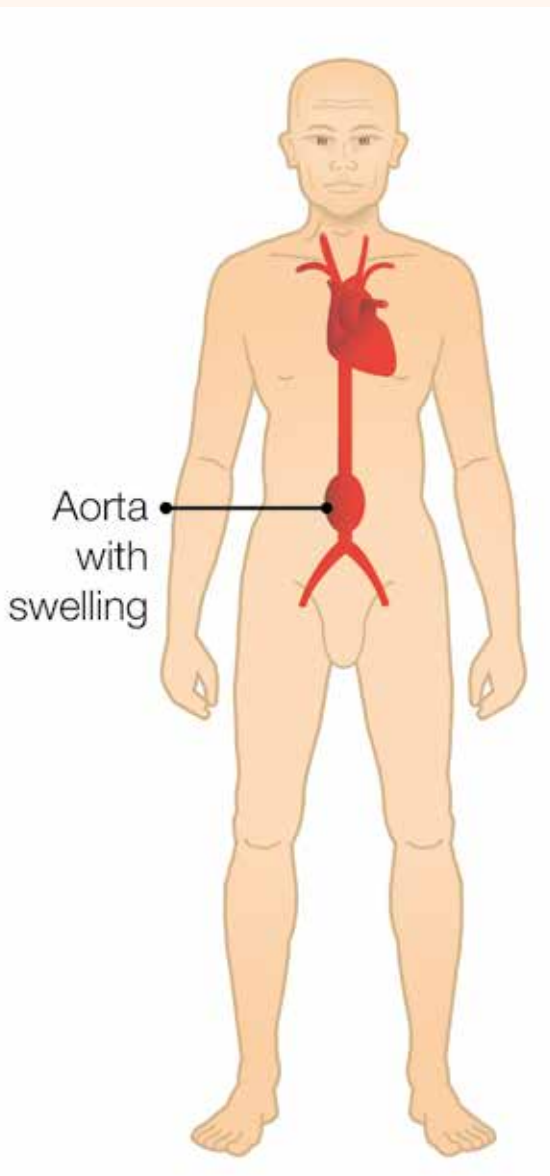


If you are worried, you can talk to your GP.

They can help you decide.



## Abdominal aortic aneurysms



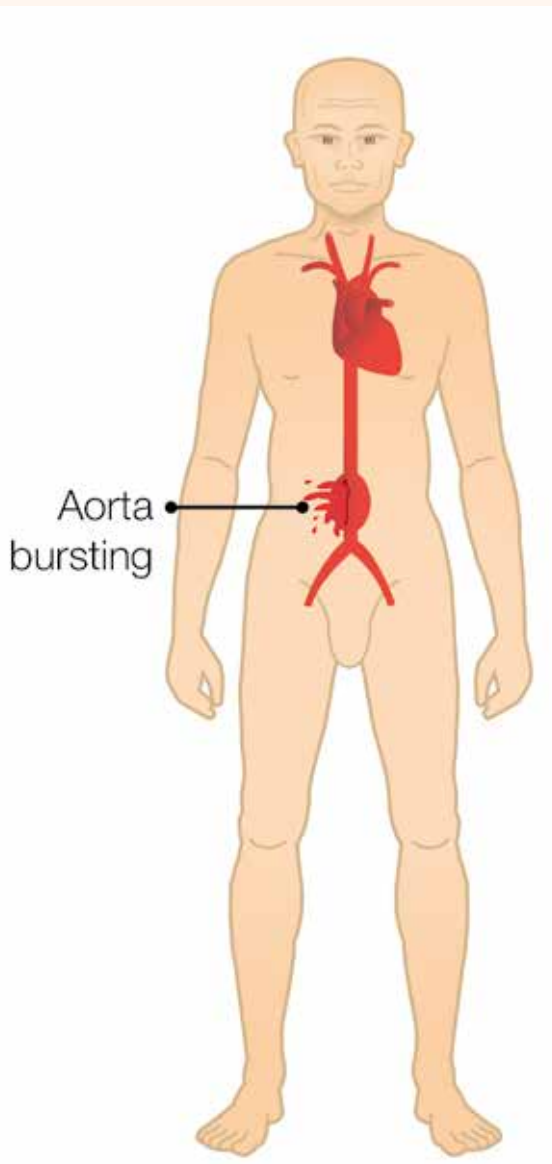
The aorta is a big blood vessel that takes blood from your heart round your body.

When some people get older, the aorta can get weak and swell up.

This is an abdominal aortic aneurysm or AAA.



A small or medium aneurysm is not dangerous. But it is important to keep checking if the aneurysm is getting any bigger.



Large abdominal aortic aneurysms can be very serious.

If the wall of the aorta gets very weak it can burst. If this happens, then the person usually dies.



Men are 6 times more likely to have an AAA than women.



That is why we only invite men for screening.



Your chance of having an AAA is more if you smoke.



Your chance of having an AAA is more if you have high blood pressure.



Your chance of having an AAA is more if your brother, sister, mother or father had an AAA.



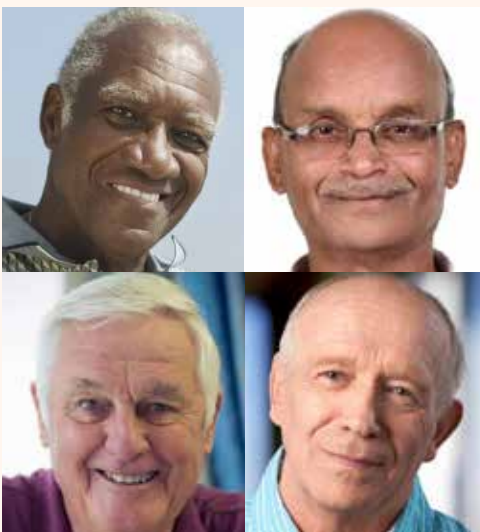
## About the test



You cannot usually tell if you have an AAA. You will not usually feel any pain or notice anything different.

Screening finds aneurysms early so we can keep checking them or treat them if we need to.

Checking helps us to make sure an aneurysm will not give you serious problems in the future.



Men aged 65 and older are most likely to get an AAA.

That is why we invite men to come for a test in the year they become 65.



The test is a very good way to find out early if you have an aneurysm.

This could save your life.



We use a simple test called an ultrasound scan. It usually takes less than 10 minutes. It does not hurt.

You might find it helpful to bring a friend or carer with you.

It is important you let us know if you need help getting out of a wheelchair on to a couch for the test.



Before the test we will give you information and you can ask any questions.

We will also ask to keep your details on our computer system.





For the test you need to be able to lie down on a couch and lift up or open your shirt. You do not need to undress.

We put a cool jelly on your tummy.



We move a small scanner over your skin.

This shows us a picture of your aorta on a screen and we can measure it.



We will tell you your result straight away and also tell your doctor.



## Test results



There are 4 possible results you could have from the test:

**No aneurysm found**

**Small aneurysm**

**Medium aneurysm**

**Large aneurysm**



## No aneurysm found



A result of 'no aneurysm found' means you do not have an aneurysm.

Most men have this result.

You will not need any treatment or checks afterwards.



## Small aneurysm

If we find a small aneurysm it means that your aorta is a bit wider than average.



You will not need treatment now. But it is important to keep checking in case your aneurysm gets bigger.

If you have a small aneurysm we will ask you to come back for a test one year later.



We will also give you advice on what you can do to help stop your aneurysm getting bigger.

Your doctor may give you pills or change medicines you take already.



They may also check your blood pressure.

Many men with a small aneurysm never need any treatment.



## Medium aneurysm



If we find a medium aneurysm it means that your aorta is wider than average.

You will not need treatment now. But it is important to keep checking in case your aneurysm gets bigger.

If you have a medium aneurysm we will ask you to come back for tests every 3 months.



We will also give you advice on what you can do to help stop your aneurysm getting bigger.

Your doctor may give you pills or change medicines you take already.



They may also check your blood pressure.



## Large aneurysm

If we find a large aneurysm it means that your aorta is much wider than average.



Very few men have a large aneurysm.

If you have a large aneurysm we will arrange for you to have more tests and to talk to a hospital doctor about treatment.



The treatment will usually be an operation.

Treatment for large aneurysms usually stops the problem. But there are some risks which the hospital doctor will tell you about.



## More information



You can phone your local screening centre using the number on the letter we sent you.



You can visit the NHS.UK website at [www.nhs.uk/aaa](http://www.nhs.uk/aaa).



You can also talk to your own doctor.

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Find out how Public Health England and the NHS use and protect your screening information at [www.gov.uk/phe/screening-data](http://www.gov.uk/phe/screening-data).

To opt out of screening, see [www.gov.uk/phe/screening-opt-out](http://www.gov.uk/phe/screening-opt-out).

Public Health England (PHE) created this leaflet on behalf of the NHS