



Vascular Associates of San Diego

Vascular Surgery & Endovascular Specialists

Vincent J. Guzzetta, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Michael E. Musicant, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Thomas T. Terramani, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Scott E. Musicant, M.D.

Physician Facts on AAA & Medicare AAA Screening Benefit

What is the new Medicare Benefit?

Beginning January 1, 2007, Medicare will offer a free, one-time, ultrasound screening benefit to check for abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) in qualified seniors linked to their Welcome to Medicare Physical Exam (WTMPE). This benefit became a law on February 8, 2006, as the Screening Abdominal Aortic Aneurysms Very Efficiently (SAAAVE) Act, a provision of S.1932, the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005.

How do I determine who qualifies for the screening?

Men who have smoked at least 100 cigarettes during their life, and men and women with a family history of AAA qualify for the one-time screening once they have undergone the WTMPE. The WTMPE must be completed within the first six months of Medicare eligibility, but there is no published time limit thereafter for completion of the AAA screening. Providers who perform the WTMPE physical and order the AAA screening need to document the AAA risk factors.

What happens to the patient if there is a positive finding of AAA during the screening?

The provider who orders the aortic ultrasound will receive the result and provide the findings to the patient. If the AAA is large, the patient would be best served by undergoing consultation by a vascular surgeon. If the AAA is small, the provider who ordered the ultrasound may elect to follow the patient, or a vascular surgery consultation could be requested. Enclosed is an order form for any vascular study from our noninvasive vascular ultrasound laboratory.

What are the treatment options for AAA?

The size and location of the AAA along with general health of the patient, will determine the type of treatment options available. Small AAAs are closely monitored with a duplex ultrasound surveillance schedule. Larger aneurysms can be treated with traditional open surgical repair or a new minimally invasive endovascular stent graft repair. The endovascular AAA repair, requiring only two small groin incisions, is much less invasive than the traditional open surgery and offers significant patient benefits such as:

- Shorter hospital stays – typically one day
- Significantly fewer cardiac and respiratory complications
- Less procedural blood loss
- Quicker return to normal activities

Update on Vascular Associates of San Diego Endovascular Stent Graft Program.

We have placed over 100 abdominal aortic stent grafts and 15 thoracic aortic stent grafts in the past 6 years. Our thoracic aortic stent graft experience is currently the largest in San Diego County. Our clinical and technical success rate is 100% with a less than 1% perioperative death rate and no stent grafts removed as a result of device failure. We have a comprehensive surveillance program and our follow-up is now approaching 6 years in some patients.

6719 Alvarado Road, Suite 303
San Diego, California 92120

Tel: (619) 286-9311
Fax: (619) 286-0619

www.vascularsandiego.com