

# Health Connection

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physician's role

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may mean**

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# Aching legs

A warning sign of vascular disease?



Mohammed Islam, M.D.  
General and Vascular  
Surgeon

**D**o you experience chronic pain, aches and fatigue in your legs? If so, it may be a sign of peripheral vascular disease (PVD)—a narrowing or blockage of the vessels that carry blood to the legs, arms, stomach, kidneys or brain. This condition often is the cause of leg pain, and can affect other parts of the body.

## RECOGNIZING PVD

“Blocked vessels in the leg most often cause pain in the calves,” says Mohammed Islam, M.D., general and vascular surgeon at Lock Haven Hospital. “You might first notice it as leg pain that starts when you walk and stops when you rest.” Certain areas, such as the arteries between the hips and in the knees, are more likely to form the sticky plaque that can narrow arteries or block blood flow.

To diagnose PVD in the legs, your physician will review your medical history and perform a physical exam. “Using a standard blood pressure cuff, your physician will take the blood pressure in both your arm and leg and compare the two numbers, which should be similar,” says Dr. Islam. If your physician suspects a blockage, he or she may recommend a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan to determine its location.

Diagnosing PVD blockage in a carotid artery (the artery to the brain) in the neck requires an ultrasound, computed tomography (CT) scan or MRI. Symptoms of a blocked carotid artery include stroke and transient ischemic attack (TIA). “It’s important to diagnose and treat a blockage early, before any serious damage occurs,” says Dr. Islam.



## TREATING THE CONDITION

Lock Haven Hospital offers a variety of treatments for PVD, including minimally invasive surgery, balloon angioplasty, stent placement and other techniques to remove plaque. “We offer a new FDA-approved procedure that is less invasive than open surgery for patients who have a blockage in the carotid artery and are experiencing stroke-like symptoms,” says Dr. Islam. “We place a stent in the neck without making a large incision. The technique has been successful, and the recovery tends to be much faster for the patient.” For patients who have a blockage in the leg, the same types of minimally invasive surgery may be recommended.

## KNOW YOUR RISK

Factors that increase risk for PVD include smoking, diabetes, high cholesterol, stroke and heart disease or a family history of heart disease. Patients whose mothers, fathers or siblings experienced a heart attack or heart procedure before age 65 may be at increased risk for circulatory disorders.

**!** Find relief!



**T**o learn more about PVD and treatment options, call Mohammed Islam, M.D., at (570) 769-7140.

# Support through change

Understanding menopause is key



**By Sanchita P. Yadalla, M.D., Board-Certified Obstetrician/Gynecologist**

**M**enopause happens at different times for different women, but it generally occurs between ages 40 and 58. This is an active time in a woman's life that may include working a full-time job, sending children to college and caring for aging parents. This busy schedule leaves little time for dealing with the dramatic changes brought on by menopause. However, understanding the causes and symptoms of menopause can help women and their loved ones deal with this natural event.

## THE BIOLOGY OF MENOPAUSE

Menopause is brought on by changes in a woman's hormone levels. Specifically, it occurs when her ovaries stop producing estrogen and progesterone, two compounds that facilitate the female reproductive process. Menopause takes place in four distinct stages:

- 1. Premenopause**, the entire reproductive life of a woman, the end of which is signaled by noticeable irregularity in her menstrual cycle.
- 2. Perimenopause**, the stage in which the most pronounced symptoms of menopause (changes in hormone levels, irregular periods, hot flashes, night sweats and mood swings) occur.
- 3. Menopause**, the point at which a woman's menstrual cycle stops, though symptoms may continue during this stage as estrogen and progesterone levels drop permanently.
- 4. Postmenopause**, after a woman has gone 12 months without menstrual periods.

## HOW TO HELP

Menopause is a natural event in the life of a maturing woman. However, these changes can be more than just

inconvenient, and family and friends should educate themselves about menopause to understand and support the woman they love. To help, family members can respect the significance of the changes taking place, give her time and space to deal with these changes and help her enjoy life and remain positive.

While menopause can be a difficult and tumultuous time, it can also be empowering. Women experiencing menopause can look confidently into the future knowing that this phase of their lives can be as productive and enjoyable as any.

If you or someone you know is experiencing menopause, be sure to consult a physician for menopause education and treatment options.



## Know your options



**T**o learn about treatment options during menopause, or to make an appointment with Sanchita P. Yadalla, M.D., call Haven Healthcare for Women at (570) 893-5043.

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## Meet our new physician



Faryal Afzal, M.D.  
Adult Internal Medicine  
Physician

Lock Haven Hospital's Board of Trustees and administration are pleased to welcome Faryal Afzal, M.D., board-eligible adult internal medical physician, to the community.

Dr. Afzal received her medical degree from Nishtar Medical College in Pakistan and completed her residency in internal medicine at Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center in Bronx,

N.Y. During her residency, she served as senior resident and has experience in bedside invasive procedures, critical care inpatient management and arthrocentesis, a procedure used to remove fluid from a joint. While in Pakistan, Dr. Afzal also completed an internship in general surgery and has special interests and research experience in nuclear stress testing and maximal heart rate studies.

Dr. Afzal offers a full spectrum of internal medicine services for adult patients and is currently accepting new patients for scheduled office appointments and hospital consultations.

### ! Make an appointment!

**F**aryal Afzal, M.D., is now seeing patients at Haven Primary Care in the Lock Haven Medical Arts Building at 208 E. Church St. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. To make an appointment with Dr. Afzal, call (570) 748-0474.

## About internists

Internists focus on adult medicine and have completed special training in the prevention and treatment of adult diseases. Internal medicine physicians must complete four years of college, four years of medical school and a three-year internal medicine residency dedicated to preventing, diagnosing and treating diseases that affect adults. Upon successful completion of these requirements, physicians may take a certification exam to become board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine. This certification is the standard in internal medicine and demonstrates that a physician has met vigorous requirements through intensive study, self assessment and evaluation and that he or she has clinical-judgment skills and attitudes essential for delivering patient care.

### When you need care

**F**inding a trusted physician is a key step on the road to a healthier you. Call (570) 893-5386 to find a dedicated physician.

