



More walks...  
and long talks.

Our cardiac and vascular clinic offers comprehensive, experienced and patient-centered care so you can get back to what matters most: Living your life.

### **WHAT IS AN ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM?**

An abdominal aortic aneurysm, or AAA, can occur in the abdominal aorta, which is a large artery. This artery carries blood from your heart through your abdomen (stomach area) to the lower body. When

part of the artery is weakened, it can stretch and balloon outward to form an aneurysm. If the artery wall is stretched too thin, the aorta may expand rapidly or even burst, which can be life-threatening.

### **WHO IS AT RISK FOR AN AAA?**

There are certain health conditions and habits that can increase your chances of developing an AAA. The most common ones include:

- Smoking
- Gender (Male)
- Being age 60 or older
- Race (Caucasian)
- Having a family history of AAA

### **WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF AN AAA?**

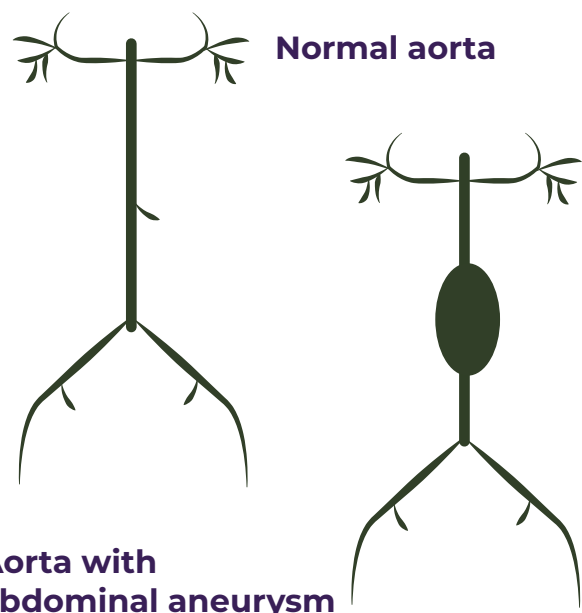
Most people experience no symptoms, but there are warning signs to look out for. Warning signs include:

- Pulsation or throbbing feeling in your abdomen
- Intense pain in your back, stomach or side
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

Smoking accounts for 75% of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm cases.

### **WHAT ARE SOME COMPLICATIONS OF AN AAA?**

An AAA can lead to the sudden burst of the aorta.





### WHAT ARE SOME TESTS FOR AN AAA?

There are a few imaging tests that can check for an AAA. The tests are:

- **Abdominal ultrasound** - This test uses a probe, which uses sound waves to make a picture of your aorta and will show if you have an AAA.
- **CT Scan** - Otherwise known as a CAT scan, this test uses a series of X-rays to create an image of the arteries in our body. This is performed at the hospital.

### HOW IS AN AAA TREATED?

What **you** can do:

AAA cannot be prevented, but you can reduce your risk with lifestyle modifications. These include:

- Quit smoking
- Comply with your medications to control your blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol

What **we** can do:

Treatment options depend on the size of the aneurysm. Options include:

- **Monitor** the aneurysm for growth
- **Repair**, if indicated
- **Medications** - There are some medications that can help prevent blood clots, calcium buildup and improved blood pressure control that might be an option for you. Our providers will explain more about these medications if they think they are right for your treatment.
- **Procedures** - This option is often advised to treat aneurysms that rapidly grow or are large enough for repair. A repair would help prevent the artery from bursting and would be performed at the hospital. If procedures are needed, our providers will refer you to a vascular surgeon.

### CARDIAC & VASCULAR CONSULTANTS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN

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**We also schedule office visits  
in Alpena and Cadillac.**

