



YOUR SCREENING RESULT

There are four possible results from the scan:

1. NORMAL

Your aorta is less than 3cm wide:

- * This is the result in more than 95% of tests.
- * You will not need any further treatment or monitoring
- * It is very unlikely that you will develop a large aneurysm later in life that could rupture or require treatment.

2. SMALL ANEURYSM FOUND

Your aorta is between 3cm- 4.4cm wide:

- * You will be invited for a scan every year to check if it is getting bigger.

3. MEDIUM ANEURYSM FOUND

Your aorta is between 4.5 and 5.4cm wide:

- * You will be scanned every 3 months to check if it is getting bigger.

4. LARGE ANEURYSM FOUND

Your aorta is 5.5cm wide or more:

- * You will be referred to a specialist team for further investigation and treatment.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AFTER THE SCREENING TEST?

If the scan shows that your aorta is **normal**, it means that you do not have an abdominal aortic aneurysm and you do not need any further tests or treatment.

If the scan shows that you have a **small** or **medium** aneurysm, you will be advised to make an appointment with your GP, who will advise you on what you can do to help stop your aneurysm getting bigger. This will include eating healthy foods, regular exercise and not smoking. Your medication may also be reviewed.

HOW CAN AN ANEURYSM BE PREVENTED?

Some measures you can take to prevent an aneurysm from developing are:

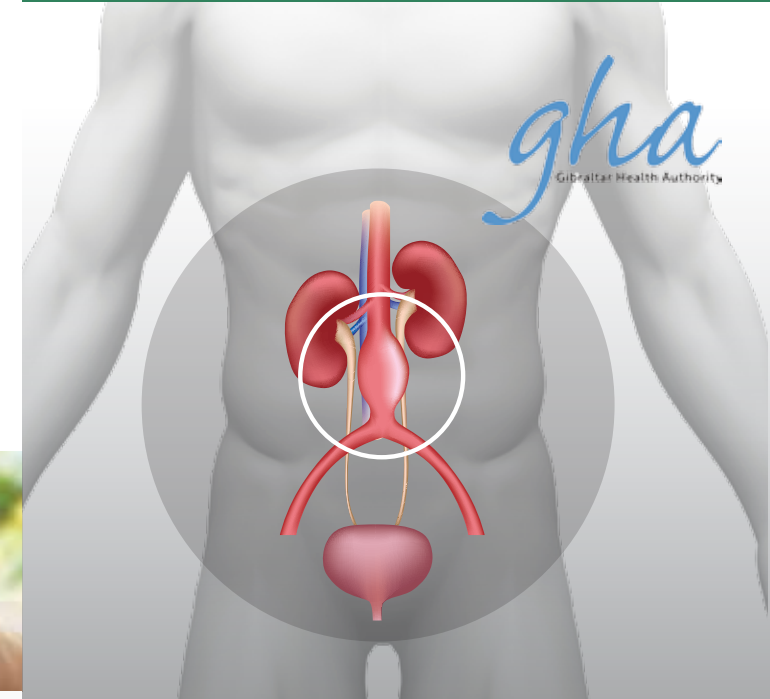
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet and avoid fatty foods
- If you are a smoker, stop smoking
- Get your blood pressure checked regularly and make sure it is normal
- If you are overweight, try and lose weight
- Take the opportunity to have a scan when invited by the GHA's AAA Screening Programme



ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM SCREENING PROGRAMME

For further information or if you want to change your screening appointment call:

The GHA Screening Programme Team on
+350 20007025



ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM (AAA) SCREENING PROGRAMME

An Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) forms when the wall of the aorta in the abdomen becomes weak and starts to expand. This condition is most common in men aged 65 years and above.

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PREPARING FOR YOUR SCREENING

- You are required to fast for two hours prior to your appointment
- You may have some fluid to drink during your fasting period but no fizzy drinks.
- If you take medication, take it as prescribed.
- If you are diabetic and are not comfortable fasting for two hours, please limit yourself to a 'diabetic meal' (a piece of toast, one cup of any kind of juice and a half of a cup of coffee or tea).
- If you have difficulty with any aspect of these instructions, please call **20072266 ext. 2285**

If you have been given an appointment for an Ultrasound Scan in the Radiology Department of St Bernard's Hospital.

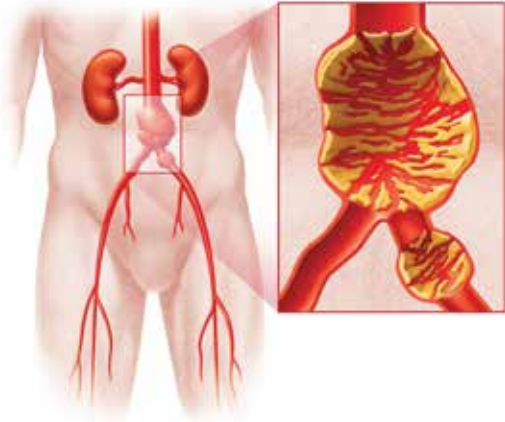
WHAT IS THE AORTA?

The aorta is the main blood vessel that supplies blood to your body. It carries oxygen-rich blood pumped out of your heart and runs from your heart down through your chest and abdomen. It is under constant pressure as it pumps blood to different parts of the body.

The part of the aorta that runs through your abdomen is called the abdominal aorta. It supplies blood to the lower part of the body.

WHAT IS AN ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM (AAA)?

In some people, the wall of the aorta in the abdomen can become weak and start to expand or bulge, forming what is called an 'abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA).



HOW COMMON IS THIS CONDITION?

Approximately 6-9% of men aged over 55 years have an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

In women and younger men, the prevalence of AAA is less than 2%

IS AN AAA SERIOUS?

Aneurysms are a health risk because as the wall of the aorta stretches, it becomes weaker and can burst or rupture. Severe internal bleeding that occurs as a result of a ruptured aneurysm can occur as a sudden and catastrophic event without warning. If this happens, your chance of surviving is only about 20%. However, if the aneurysm is repaired before this stage, the survival rate is more than 97%.

AAA is the cause of about 2% of all deaths among men aged between 65-85 years.

RISK FACTORS

Key risk factors for AAA that have been identified include:

1. Male sex
2. Increasing age
3. Smoking
4. Hypertension
5. Hypercholesterolemia
6. Low HDL cholesterol
7. Genetics

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF AN ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM?

Aneurysms are silent but deadly. They develop slowly over many years and often have no symptoms. Symptoms may develop suddenly if an aneurysm

- Expands rapidly;
- Develops a leak;
- Balloons through the wall of the aorta ("dissection"); or
- bursts

These symptoms include:

- Pain in the abdomen that may be severe, sudden and persistent
- Nausea and vomiting
- Rapid heart rate when rising to a standing position
- Pulsating sensation in the abdomen
- Fainting

HOW IS AN ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM DETECTED?

An abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is detected using a simple screening test called an ultrasound scan.

If you are a man aged 65 years the GHA will invite you to take part in the AAA Screening programme.

Please do not ignore this invitation!

WHY IS SCREENING IMPORTANT?

Screening helps to find aneurysms early and monitor or treat them. This reduces the chances of the aneurysm causing serious health problems.

Research has shown that screening for AAA can reduce the number of deaths from burst aneurysms among men aged 65 and over by up to 50%.

THE GHA SCREENING PROGRAMME

The GHA has a Screening Programme for all men, which will be offered to them around their 65th birthday. It is a one-off test that will not need to be repeated ever again (unless an aneurysm is found)



WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE SCREENING TEST?

The AAA screening programme uses a safe, simple and pain-free test called an ultrasound scan. This test involves bouncing sound waves into the body and examining the echoes on a screen. It is completely painless and usually takes less than 10 minutes.

At the clinic, the doctor will check your details, explain the procedure and give you the chance to ask any questions. You will be asked to lie down and lift up or unbutton your shirt. A cool jelly will be applied over your abdomen and a small scanner will be moved over the skin.

An image of your aorta will appear on the screen and this will be measured carefully. A normal aorta measures 3cm or less.

The doctor will give you your results at once - there is no need to wait.

