



# Cigarette Smoking among Blacks Decreases Blood Flow

## Purpose of the study

Fatty deposits in the blood vessels can decrease the flow of blood to the legs and arms. When this happens, it is called peripheral arterial disease (PAD). PAD is more common among African Americans than White Americans and is a risk factor for having a heart attack or stroke. Cigarette smoking is one of many factors that can lead to PAD. Jackson Heart Study researchers examined the relationship between cigarette smoking and smoking intensity with early signs of PAD, such as decreased blood flow to the limbs and calcium buildup in the aorta - the main artery that moves blood away from the heart.

## Major findings

- Compared to non-smokers, current smokers
  - had greater narrowing of the arteries in their legs and arms, and
  - were more likely to have calcium buildup in the aorta
- Those who smoked more than 20 cigarettes daily (1 pack) were more likely to have greater narrowing of the blood vessels in the limbs and calcium buildup in the aorta than those who smoked fewer cigarettes.



## Take away message

Cigarette smoking is related to decreased blood flow to the legs, arms, and main artery of the body among African American men and women. These findings highlight:

- the importance of the connection between smoking, peripheral arterial disease and heart health; and
- the importance of programs and treatments available to help people to quit smoking which ultimately reduces the chance to develop PAD, heart attack, or stroke.

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[www.jacksonheartstudy.org](http://www.jacksonheartstudy.org)

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