

Five Most Important Things Baby Boomers can do to Maintain Good Vascular Health



Baby boomers need to understand how to maintain a healthy vascular system as they become seniors. By 2015, the U.S. Census reports an expected 87 million people aged 55 and older, up from 67 million in 2005. Since vascular disease primarily affects seniors, the number of vascular disease cases is expected to rise dramatically.

The vascular system is made up of arteries and veins that carry oxygen-rich blood throughout the body to vital organs, the brain, and legs. As we age, our arteries tend to thicken with a build-up of plaque and cholesterol, get stiffer, and narrow.

When blood flow is restricted, vascular diseases like carotid artery disease can lead to stroke; peripheral arterial disease can lead to problems walking and in the most advanced cases, foot ulcers, gangrene and possible amputation; and abdominal aortic aneurysm can result in death if not treated early.

People should know what they can do to protect their vascular health. These five practices are not new, but with so many people reaching senior status, it is important to remember the positive impact they can have on their vascular health:

1. Stop smoking
2. Eat a healthy, low fat diet
3. Maintain good cholesterol levels
4. Take care of their blood pressure to keep it in a normal range
5. Exercise regularly – even a moderate walking program can be effective

People aged 55 and older should talk with their primary care physician about their vascular health. Painless, noninvasive tests can determine if there are blockages in a patient's neck or leg arteries or if there is aneurysm formation in the aorta. If there is an indication of a blockage, patients should seek treatment immediately. Vascular disease can be controlled if diagnosed and treated early. Vascular surgeons treat these diseases with lifestyle changes, medical management, minimally invasive endovascular angioplasty and stent procedures, and open bypass surgery.

Life Line Screening performs local screenings. To find a screening in your area call 800-324-1851 or visit www.lifelinescreening.com and use priority code HSC6302 when registering. For more information please contact Nancy Ryan 800-897-9177 x 1545

