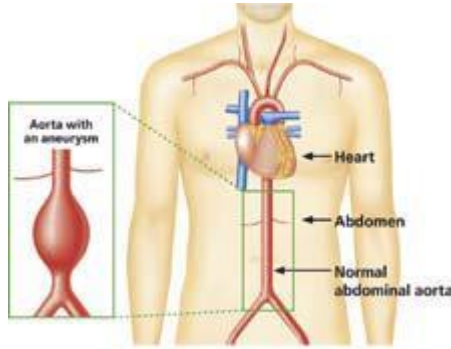


Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

The aorta is the main blood vessel that supplies blood to your body. It runs from your heart down through your chest and abdomen.



In some people, as they get older, the wall of the aorta in the abdomen can become weak. It can then start to expand and form what is called an abdominal aortic aneurysm. The condition is most common in men aged 65 and above, men are six times more likely to have an aneurysm than women and the risk of having an aneurysm increases if; you are or have been a smoker, you have high blood pressure or you have a close family member who has had one.

If you have an AAA you will not usually notice any signs or symptoms; this means you cannot tell if you have one, will not feel any pain or notice anything different. Large aneurysms are rare but can be very serious. As the wall of the aorta stretches it becomes weak and can burst, causing internal bleeding. Over 80% of people will die when an aneurysm bursts.

An aorta that is only slightly larger than normal is not necessarily dangerous; however, it is still important to know about it so that it can be monitored to see if it is getting bigger and treated if necessary.

AAA screening is a free NHS national programme that automatically invites men in the year they turn 65 to check if they have an abdominal aortic aneurysm. The screening is by invitation only and is a quick and painless ultra sound scan that measures the aorta. The results are given on the day straight after the scan has been completed.

If you are a man aged over 65 you are more at risk of an abdominal aortic aneurysm than any other demographic so this is why you will be invited for screening. We offer screening so we can find aneurysms early and monitor or treat them. This greatly reduces the chances of the aneurysm causing serious problems and hopes to reduce mortality of ruptured AAAs by 50%.

Please watch out for your invitation, which will be sent by QE Hospital Gateshead. However, your scan will be at a clinic local to where you live. You can change your appointment to a more suitable one by contacting your local screening service on: [0191 445 8747](tel:01914458747)

Click here for: [leaflet with more information on the AAA screening process](#) or here for [accessible AAA screening process leaflets](#), or visit our website: [Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm - QE Gateshead](#)