

For Fall 2005 Calendar

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Growing Diabetic Population at High Risk for Peripheral Arterial Disease, a Marker for Stroke, Heart Attack and Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm

Free National Screening by Interventional Radiologists Saves Lives and Limbs

WHO: Each year 1.3 million Americans age 20 and older are diagnosed with diabetes. Diabetes leads to narrowing and blocked smaller arteries in the legs, which puts the 18.2 million American diabetics at risk for peripheral arterial disease (PAD) – a red flag for several life-threatening vascular diseases, such as heart attack (the #1 cause of death in the United States), stroke (#3) and abdominal aortic aneurysms (#17).

Ten million Americans have PAD -- clogged or narrowed arteries in the legs due to atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is a gradual process in which cholesterol and scar tissue build up, forming a substance called “plaque” that clogs the arteries. This causes decreased blood flow and can result in pain when walking, and eventually gangrene and amputation. Because atherosclerosis is a systemic disease, people with PAD are likely to develop blocked arteries in other areas of the body. Vascular diseases caused by atherosclerosis, commonly called “hardening of the arteries,” account for more deaths in the U.S. than any other cause.

With more than 50 percent of PAD patients asymptomatic or with atypical symptoms, screening is essential for diagnosis, especially for diabetics and other high-risk populations. If PAD is caught early, many amputations could be prevented, as well as disease progression and subsequent deaths from systemic vascular disease.

WHAT: *Legs For Life®*, a free, national screening program, raises awareness among the public, physicians, and health care providers, as well as identifies people at risk for PAD. Select sites also will screen for abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA), stroke risk, and venous disease. As diagnostic and vascular experts, interventional radiologists can intervene early, prevent vascular disease progression, provide nonsurgical treatment if needed, and monitor for stroke and AAA using diagnostic imaging.

WHEN: September is *Vascular Disease Awareness Month*.

WHERE: Hundreds of screening locations across the country that can be found at www.LegsForLife.org.
Note: Screenings are free, but conducted by appointment.

Legs For Life® is the largest, longest running, and most inclusive national vascular disease screening program in the United States. The program has been held annually in September since 1998. Nearly 322,000 people have been screened to date, with one in four found to be at risk for PAD. Legs For Life was developed by the Society of Interventional Radiology (SIR) and is managed by the SIR Foundation. Members of SIR lead screenings. Collaborating organizations include the American Diabetes Association, the American Radiological Nurses Association, the American Heart Association’s Council on Cardiovascular Radiology and Intervention, and the Society for Vascular Nursing. More information can be found at www.LegsForLife.org.