**ABDOMINAL AORTIC ANEURYSM (AAA SCREENING)**

**Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening is a way of checking if there's a bulge or swelling in the aorta, the main blood vessel that runs from your heart down through your tummy.**

This bulge or swelling is called an [abdominal aortic aneurysm, or AAA](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/abdominal-aortic-aneurysm/).

It can be serious if it's not spotted early on because it could get bigger and eventually burst (rupture).

**Who's screened for AAA**

In England, screening for AAA is offered to men during the year they turn 65.

Men aged 65 or over are most at risk of getting AAAs. Screening can help spot a swelling in the aorta early on when it can usually be treated.

Screening for AAA is not routinely offered to:

* women
* men under 65
* people who have already been treated for an AAA

This is because the risk of getting an AAA is much smaller in these groups.

If you're over 65 years old, you can ask for a scan to check for an AAA if you think you might need one but have not been offered a screening test.

**How to get screened for AAA**

If you're a man and registered with a GP, you'll get a screening invitation in the post when you're 64 or soon after your 65th birthday. You can then arrange an appointment that suits you.

If you're a man over 65 and have not been screened before, you can ask for a test by contacting [your local AAA screening service](https://www.nhs.uk/Service-Search/Abdominal-aortic-aneurysm-screening/LocationSearch/1910) directly.

**Benefits of AAA screening**

An AAA will often cause few or no obvious symptoms, but if it's left to get bigger, it could burst and cause life-threatening bleeding inside your tummy.

Although very rare, about 8 in every 10 people who have a burst AAA die before they get to hospital or do not survive emergency surgery to repair it.

Screening can pick up an AAA before it bursts. If an AAA is found, you can choose to have regular scans to monitor it or surgery to stop it bursting.

The screening test is very quick, painless and reliable. Research suggests it can halve the risk of dying from an AAA.

**Reducing your risk of an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)**

There are several things you can do to reduce your chances of getting an AAA or help stop one getting bigger. These include:

* **Stopping smoking** – please contact the Practice if you would like advice on stopping smoking.
* **Eating healthily** – eat a balanced diet and cut down on fatty food.
* **Take regular exercise**
* **Maintain a healthy weight**
* **Cut down on alcohol**