

Arterial and Venous Ultrasound

Definition

This test uses ultrasound to look at the blood flow in the large arteries and veins in the arms or legs.

How the Test is Performed

The test is done in the ultrasound or radiology department, a hospital room, or in a peripheral vascular lab.

During the exam:

- A water-soluble gel is placed on a handheld device called a transducer. This device directs high-frequency sound waves to the artery or veins being tested.
- Blood pressure cuffs may be put around different parts of the body, including the thigh, calf, ankle, and different points along the arm.



How to Prepare for the Test

You will need to remove clothes from the arm or leg being examined.

How the Test will Feel

Sometimes, the person performing the test will need to press on the vein to make sure it does not have a clot. Some people may feel slight pain from the pressure.

Risks

There are no risks from this procedure.

Considerations

Cigarette smoking may alter the results of this test. Nicotine can cause the arteries in the extremities to constrict.

Quitting smoking lowers the risk for problems with the heart and circulatory system. Most smoking-related deaths are caused by cardiovascular problems, not lung cancer.

How Long will Test Last

Most of the time, the test will last less than 30 minutes.

Alternative Names Peripheral vascular disease - Doppler; PVD - Doppler; PAD - Doppler; Blockage of leg arteries - Doppler; Intermittent claudication - Doppler; Arterial insufficiency of the legs - Doppler; Leg pain and cramping - Doppler; Calf pain - Doppler; Venous Doppler - DVT