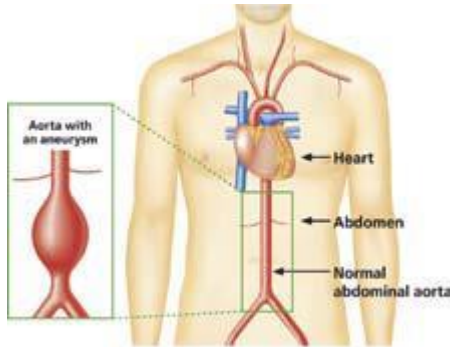


# AAA (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm)

AAA stands for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm. 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 your 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 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. Around 85% die when an aneurysm bursts.

An aorta that is only slightly larger than normal is not dangerous; however, it is still important to know about it so that we can check if the aneurysm is getting bigger.

AAA screening is a free NHS national programme that screens men aged 65 plus to check if they have an abdominal aortic aneurysm. The screening is by invitation and uses an ultra sound scan. 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.

Men over 65 who have not previously been screened or diagnosed with an aneurysm can request a scan by contacting their local programme directly on: [0191 445 2554](tel:01914452554)

The North East of England and North Cumbria AAA screening programme is run from The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, you will be invited to a local clinic for an ultra sound scan. Our centre covers the area from North Yorkshire to Berwick and North Cumbria.

Click here for a [leaflet with more information on the AAA screening process](#) or here for [accessible AAA screening process leaflets](#)

<http://www.qegateshead.nhs.uk/aaa>