



Ankle-Brachial Index or ABI Test

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A non-invasive test that uses inflatable cuffs to gauge circulation (blood flow) and measure blood pressure in the arteries at various locations on the thigh, calf, foot and toes. Done in an outpatient clinic or vascular laboratory.

Minimal, brief discomfort, similar to what you feel while having a routine blood pressure test with an inflatable arm cuff.

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Description

Blood pressure cuffs of various sizes are placed on your thigh, calf, foot and toes. Similar to having your blood pressure checked with an arm cuff, as the technician inflates the cuffs, they progressively tighten and are then quickly released. You may feel some discomfort, but generally for less than 60 seconds for each measurement.

Risks

Aside from the momentary discomfort described above, side effects or complications are very rare.

How to Prepare

- Wear clothing that will allow access to your thigh, calf, ankle and foot.
- If you have a wound or ulcer anywhere on your leg or foot, bring extra dressing supplies to dress the area after testing is completed. Dressings that cover wounds sometimes need to be partially or completely removed.
- Let the vascular laboratory technician know if you have had any previous bypass operations, stents, or angioplasty for leg circulation.
- Testing generally lasts 10-20 minutes, depending on the number of measurements taken.

What Can I Expect After the Test?

- You can resume your normal activities after testing is complete.
- The technician performing the test may be able to tell how your results compare to normal.
- Discuss with your vascular surgeon whether you need further testing or treatment.