

# A Guide for Patients: Renal and Mesenteric Artery Occlusive Disease






## What is Renal and Mesenteric Artery Occlusive Disease?

**Renal and mesenteric artery occlusive disease** happens when the blood vessels that carry blood to your kidneys and intestines become narrow or blocked. The blockage usually comes from a buildup of fat and cholesterol inside the vessels. When less blood can flow through, your kidneys and intestines don't get enough oxygen, which can cause health problems.





### What to Look For

Most people have only a small or medium blockage and don't feel any symptoms. When the blockage is worse, symptoms can appear and depend on which blood vessels are affected.

If the renal (kidney) arteries are blocked, symptoms can include:

-  High blood pressure: Often hard to control with regular medications.
-  Kidney problems: The kidneys may not work as well, which can cause swelling in the legs, extra fluid in the body or changes in urination.
-  Kidney failure: In serious cases, the kidneys can stop working, which can be life-threatening.

If the mesenteric (intestinal) arteries are blocked, symptoms can include:

-  Stomach pain: Often happens after eating, when the intestines don't get enough blood for digestion.
-  Weight loss: This can happen because of pain when eating or because your body doesn't absorb food well.
-  Nausea or vomiting: Feeling sick or throwing up, especially after meals.
-  Bowel changes: Such as diarrhea or sometimes constipation.

### Causes and Risks

The most common cause is when fatty material (called plaque) builds up inside the blood vessels over time. This makes the blood vessels narrow.

However, these diseases can also happen suddenly because of:

- A blood clot that gets stuck in the blood vessel
- Swelling and irritation inside the blood vessels

## Recognizing Renal and Mesenteric Artery Occlusive Disease



If a vascular surgeon thinks you might have this disease, they will order tests to look at your blood vessels. These tests will be done at a hospital or imaging lab and include:

- Ultrasound
- CT scan
- MRI scan

Sometimes the surgeon needs a more detailed look with an arteriogram. For this test: they put a thin tube (catheter) into a large blood vessel and then guide it to the blood vessels near your kidneys or intestines. They inject a special dye that shows up on X-rays to see how blood is flowing and find any blockages.

### Role of a Vascular Surgeon



If you have symptoms, you may want to ask your doctor if a vascular surgeon is right for you. Vascular surgeons are the only specialists trained to recognize and treat the full spectrum of vascular diseases. They can recognize signs of renal and mesenteric artery occlusive disease and choose the best individualized treatment .

## Treatment

All patients with renal and mesenteric artery occlusive disease need to take medications to help keep their blood vessels healthy. Doctors may also give advice about lifestyle changes, like eating better and exercising.

If you do not have symptoms, you probably will not need any other treatment, but you should visit your doctor regularly so they can check on you and make sure things aren't getting worse.

If you have symptoms or major blockages, you may need a stent. A stent is a small tube that doctors put in the blood vessel to hold it open and let blood flow better. If the stent does not work, a doctor may need to perform surgery to remove the plaque or create a new path for blood to flow around the blocked blood vessel.