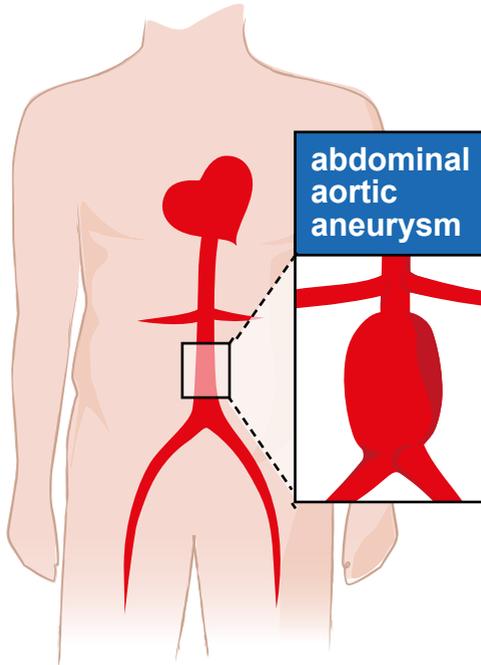


Rhaglen Sgrinio
Ymlediadau Aortig
Abdomenol Cymru



Wales Abdominal
Aortic Aneurysm
Screening Programme



Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme

Helping you decide



phw.nhs.wales/aaa-screening



Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme – Helping you decide

This leaflet is available in alternative formats, for example Easy Read, large print or Braille. Please call your local screening office on the number in your invitation letter. An audio leaflet is also available – go to phw.nhs.wales/aaa-screening for details. You can contact us in Welsh or English. It will take us the same amount of time to answer you, whichever language you choose.

Abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) screening summary

We will invite you for AAA screening if you are a man, aged 65, who lives in Wales and are registered as living in Wales.

AAA screening involves a simple ultrasound scan to measure the abdominal aorta.

The scan may be slightly uncomfortable due to pressure on the abdomen.

It is a free NHS screening test.

If you are not in the screening age group and are concerned that you may have an AAA or are worried about a family history of AAA, you should speak to your doctor.

Like all medical tests, AAA screening is not 100% accurate.

**It is your choice whether to have AAA screening or not.
This leaflet gives you information to help you decide.**

Why does the NHS offer AAA screening?

The NHS offers screening to save lives from a ruptured (splitting or tearing) abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA).

What is an AAA?

The aorta is the main blood vessel that supplies blood to the body. Sometimes the wall of the aorta in the abdomen can become weak and stretch to form an aneurysm. When this happens there is a risk that the aorta may split or tear (rupture).

A ruptured AAA can lead to serious blood loss that will need immediate emergency treatment.

Not every AAA will rupture, but if it does the chances of getting to hospital and surviving surgery are very poor.

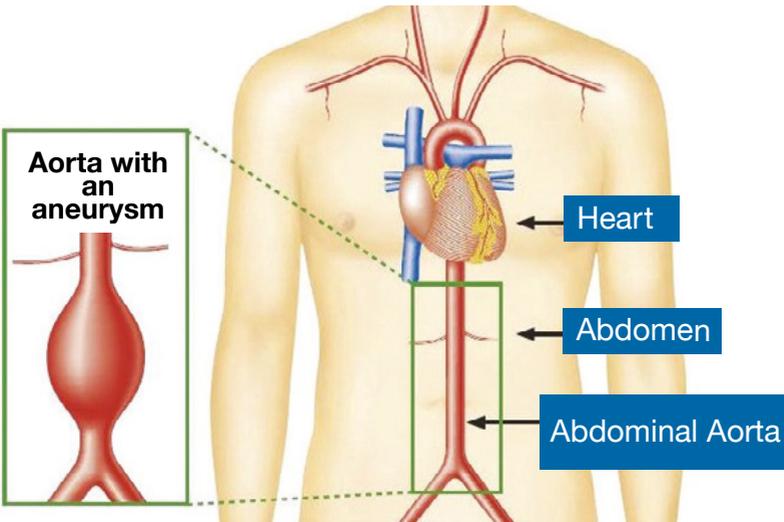


Diagram to show an abdominal aorta and an aorta with an aneurysm.

Image courtesy of the NHS Screening Programme (England)

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme – Helping you decide

Who is most at risk of an AAA?

An AAA can happen to anyone but it is most common in men aged 65 and over.

Other risk factors

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- A family history of AAA

Anyone not eligible for AAA screening should discuss any concerns they may have with their doctor.

For help giving up smoking, contact

Help Me Quit

Phone: 0800 085 2219

Website: www.helpmequit.wales



Why have I been invited for AAA screening?

Men aged 65 are invited to be screened if they are registered as living in Wales.

People who are transgender or non-binary may need to have AAA screening. To find out more, visit our website pages for people who are transgender and non-binary:
phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/screening/information-for-people-who-are-transgender-trans-and-or-non-binary.

If you are over 65 and have never been for an NHS AAA screening scan, you can ask for a scan by contacting your local screening programme.

South East Wales

Phone: 01443 23 51 61

West Wales

Phone: 01792 45 31 62

North Wales

Phone: 01492 86 35 63

Email: aaa@wales.nhs.uk

Why is AAA screening only for men?

Men are six times more likely to have an AAA than women. A ruptured AAA is less common in women and on average happens 10 years later than in men. The National Screening Committee does not recommend that AAA screening is offered to women. Women who have a family history of AAA should speak to their doctor for advice.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

Screening Programme – Helping you decide

Why is screening important?

If you go to your AAA screening appointment, we can find an AAA earlier and offer you monitoring or treatment.

The easiest way to find out if you have an AAA is by having a simple ultrasound scan of your abdomen.

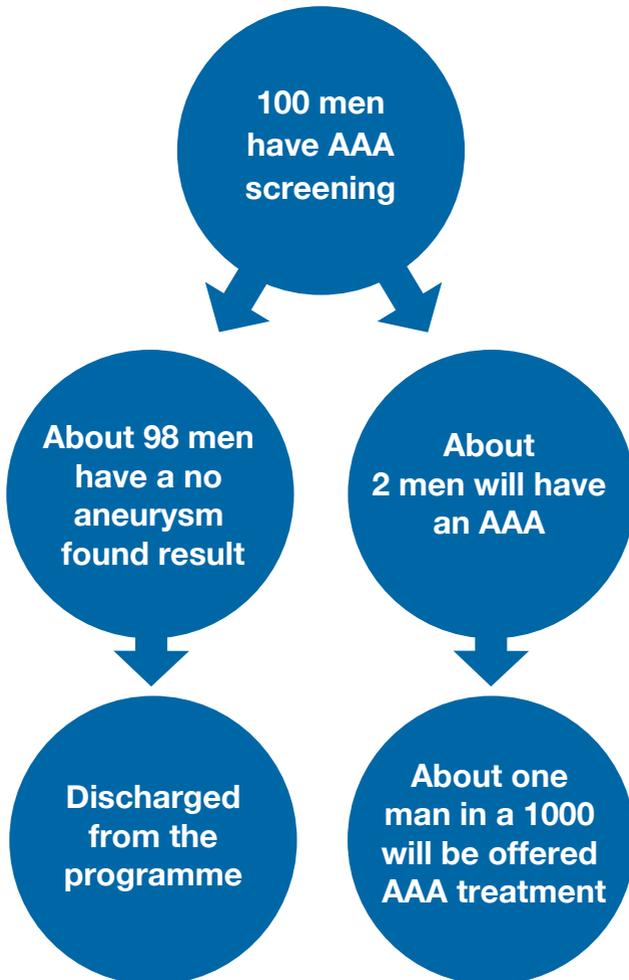
Is AAA screening accurate?

The scan used to find an AAA is very reliable but like any medical test, AAA screening is not 100% accurate. Sometimes results can be reported wrongly but this is very rare. This means that a person may be told that they have an AAA when in fact they don't, or a person may be told that they don't have an AAA when they do.

The screening programme regularly checks records to make sure the service is as good as possible. If you want to know the results of these regular checks, you can contact your local screening unit.

Screening finds AAA early so they can be monitored or treated. About 98 men out of every 100 (98%) who are screened for an AAA are told that no aneurysm has been found and are not offered any further tests.

What happens to 100 men when they have screening for an AAA



Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

Screening Programme – Helping you decide

What is AAA screening?

AAA screening involves having an ultrasound scan to measure the size of your abdominal aorta. It is the best way of detecting an AAA. To have a clear scan of your abdominal aorta the screener will need to press on your abdomen.

The ultrasound scan for AAA screening only takes a few minutes. We monitor the quality and accuracy of your AAA scan and if there is any concern about your scan measurements we may invite you for another AAA scan. If no aneurysm is found, you will not be invited for any more AAA screening appointments.

What will happen when I go for screening?

You will need to be able to get on to a bed and lie flat for a scan. If you are not able to do this without help, please call us for further information.

Your screening appointment will usually take about 10 to 15 minutes.

The screener is the trained person who will check your personal details when you arrive, ask for your consent (permission) and carry out your ultrasound scan.

If you are worried about anything you can ask the screener at any time.

What is an ultrasound scan?

An ultrasound machine uses sound waves to create an image on a computer screen.



How is the ultrasound scan done?

The screener will explain what will happen during the scan. You will not need to undress. The screener will ask you to lie on your back and lift up your shirt or top so that they can see your abdomen.

The screener will put some clear gel on your abdomen and pass an ultrasound probe over your abdomen.

To get a clear image the screener may need to apply some pressure, but this should not be painful.

An image of the aorta will be displayed on a monitor. The screener will measure the size of the aorta to see if an AAA is present.

Will AAA screening pick up other problems?

No, AAA screening is just to find out if you have an AAA. It does not look for other health problems. If you are worried about your health, you should speak to your doctor.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

Screening Programme – Helping you decide

AAA screening results

You will be given your results by the screener immediately after your scan. There are four possible results.

No aneurysm found result (measuring less than 3 cm)

If your aorta is less than 3 cm wide, this means you do not have an aneurysm. About 98 men out of every 100 (98%) who are screened for an AAA are told that no aneurysm has been found and are not offered any further tests. You don't need treatment or monitoring. We will not invite you for AAA screening again.

Small and medium AAA (measuring 3 to 5.4 cm)

If your abdominal aorta is between 3 and 4.4 cm wide, you have a small AAA. If your abdominal aorta is between 4.5 and 5.4 cm wide, you have a medium AAA. About two men out of every 100 (2%) screened are told they have a small or medium AAA. We will invite you to have regular ultrasound scans to check the size of your AAA. How often you will need a scan will depend on the size of your AAA. You may also need medication, which will be prescribed by your doctor. A small or medium AAA carries less risk of rupture than a large AAA.

Large AAA (5.5 cm or more)

If your abdominal aorta is 5.5 cm wide or bigger you have a large AAA. One man out of 1000 (0.1%) screened are told they have a large AAA. We will refer you to a specialist team at a hospital who will carry out more tests and talk with you about your options for treatment.

Treatment may include having an operation. For a small number of men, an operation will not be possible.

Some AAA operations carry significant risks but the chances of recovery are much better if the operation is planned.

If you have an AAA of any size and are planning a holiday you should tell your travel insurance provider.

The specialist team will tell you whether or not you need to tell the DVLA (Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency).

Driving with an AAA

It is unlikely that having an AAA diagnosed or being monitored by the screening programme will affect you holding a valid driving licence. The DVLA are responsible for deciding whether people can drive on the basis of their health or any conditions they may have.

You can find the current advice on the GOV.UK website:

www.gov.uk/aneurysm-and-driving

Your doctor and the hospital specialist team can advise you whether or not you should drive.

Non-visualised

In very rare cases the screener may not be able to see your abdominal aorta on the screen. This means they will be unable to measure it. This is nothing for you to worry about and may happen for a number of reasons. The screener will discuss this with you if this happens.

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

Screening Programme – Helping you decide

Making a choice - the possible benefits and risks of AAA screening

Screening

It is your choice whether to have AAA screening. There are many different reasons why men decide not to have screening. To help you decide we've included information on the possible benefits and risks.

Screening saves lives from AAA

Lives are saved because AAA are identified and treated earlier than they would have been without screening.

Screening may find an AAA that would never have caused a man harm

Some men will be identified with an AAA that would never otherwise have been found and would not have become life-threatening. This is the main risk of screening.

How do you get my personal details?

We are an NHS organisation. We get your name and address from a national database called the Welsh Demographic Service which is managed by Digital Health and Care Wales. This database holds a record of names and addresses for every person registered as living in Wales.

How do you use information about me?

We need to keep your personal information so we know if and when you have had a scan or whether you have decided not to have one. For us to contact you as part of this programme, we will need to handle some of your personal information.

If you need information about this, you can:

- visit the website phw.nhs.wales/use-of-site/privacy-notice/;
- email PHW.InformationGovernance@wales.nhs.uk; or
- phone 02920 22 77 44.

Where can I find more information?

If you need any more information you can:

- phone us;
- ask your doctor or health-care professional; or
- visit the following websites.

[Wales Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme](https://phw.nhs.wales/aaa-screening)
phw.nhs.wales/aaa-screening

NHS Direct Wales

Using your information when you access the service
111.wales.nhs.uk/aboutus/yourinformation

Circulation Foundation

(a charity supporting people with vascular disease)
Phone: 020 7205 7151 www.circulationfoundation.org.uk

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

Screening Programme – Helping you decide

Contact us if you:

- cannot attend your appointment – we may be able to offer you a more suitable time, date and location;
- are not planning to attend – we can offer your appointment to someone else;
- have a disability or need support – you can ask for a longer appointment; or
- have missed your AAA screening – we can arrange a new appointment.

South East Wales

Phone: 01443 23 51 61

West Wales

Phone: 01792 45 31 62

North Wales

Phone: 01492 86 35 63

Email: aaa@wales.nhs.uk

Summary of things you need to know about AAA

The following information is based on the best available evidence.

- About 98 men out of 100 (98%) who are screened for AAA will have a no aneurysm found result.
- A **no aneurysm found** aorta measures less than 3 cm in diameter.
- A **small** AAA measures between 3 and 4.4 cm in diameter.
- A **medium** AAA measures between 4.5 and 5.4 cm in diameter.
- About two men out of 100 (2%) will have a small or medium-sized AAA.
- A **large** AAA measures 5.5 cm or over.
- One man out of 1000 (0.1%) will have a large AAA.