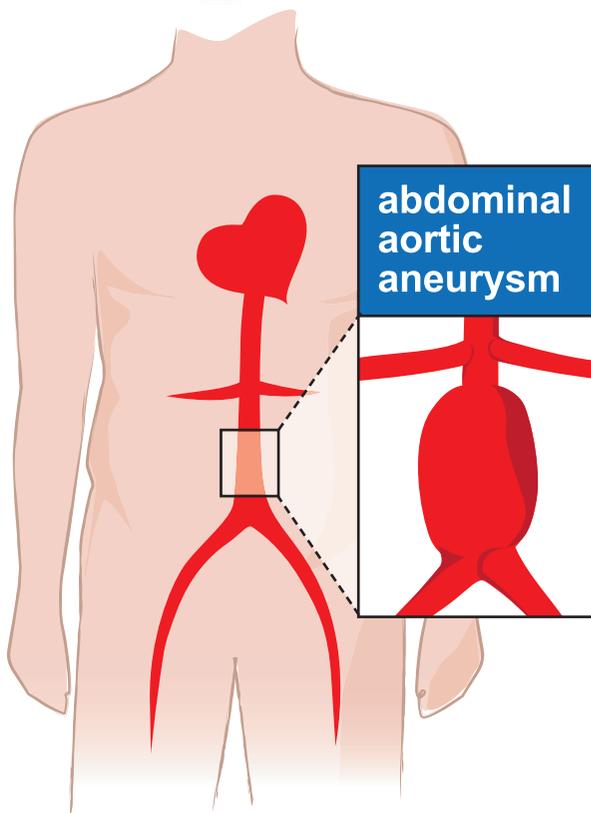


Rhaglen Sgrinio
Ymlediadau Aortig
Abdomenol Cymru



Wales Abdominal
Aortic Aneurysm
Screening Programme



Small and Medium AAA

Your result shows a small or medium abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA)

What happens now?

phw.nhs.wales/aaa-screening



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Iechyd Cyhoeddus
Cymru
Public Health
Wales

Small and Medium AAA - your result

This leaflet is available in alternative formats, for example large print or Braille. Please call your local screening office on the number in your invitation letter.

This leaflet provides information for men who have had a small or medium abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) found through AAA screening.

Your AAA screening result

We found that a section of your abdominal aorta is a little wider than expected. This means you have an AAA and at this stage it only needs to be monitored.

Around two men out of 100 (2%) who go for screening have a small or medium AAA.

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

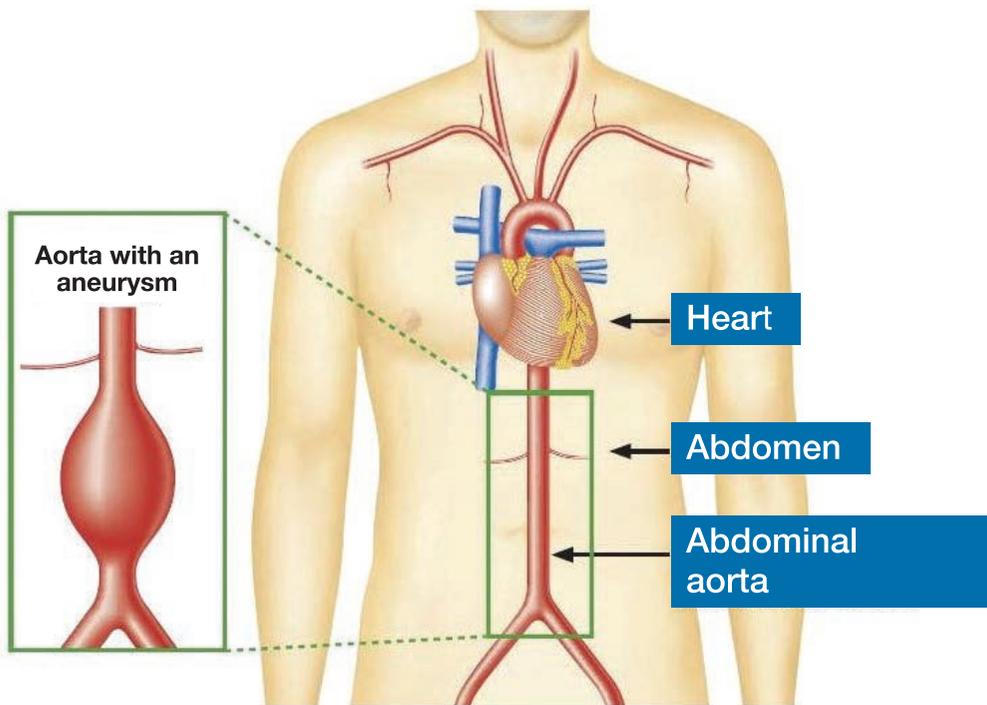


Image courtesy of the NHS
Screening Programme (England)

Small and Medium AAA - your result

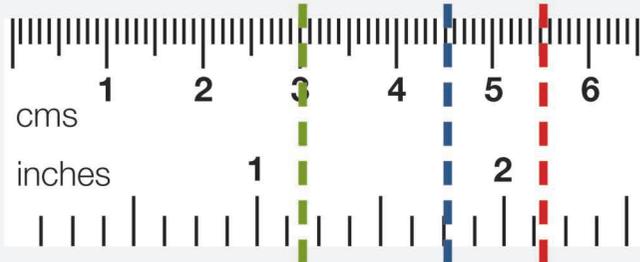
What is an AAA?

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, which is called a rupture. The larger the AAA, the bigger the risk of rupture.

Small AAA
3cm – 4.4cm

Medium AAA
4.5cm – 5.4cm

Large AAA
5.5cm or over



Is my AAA serious?

A small AAA is rarely serious. Most AAA grow very slowly, so many men with a small AAA may never develop a medium or large AAA.

A medium AAA could become serious in the future if it continues to grow. Most AAA grow very slowly, so some men with a medium AAA may never develop a large AAA.

However, it is important to monitor the size of your AAA regularly in case it gets bigger.

phw.nhs.wales/aaa-screening



What happens next?

An AAA nurse will contact you within five days of your AAA scan. The nurse will discuss your result in more detail and give you advice on your general health and how other conditions may affect your AAA. The AAA nurse will recommend that you make an appointment to see your GP to check your blood pressure and discuss health and lifestyle issues.

You do not need any treatment at present. Depending on the size of your AAA we will invite you to come back for a monitoring scan:

- every **year** if you have a **small AAA**; or
- every **three months** if you have a **medium AAA**.

We will send you a letter with the date of your next appointment. If you change address in the meantime, please tell the local screening office as soon as possible.

Small and Medium AAA - your result



What happens at the monitoring scan?

The monitoring scan is the same procedure as your first screening scan. We will give you the result of your scan at the time of the appointment. We will also tell your GP practice or other responsible healthcare professional about your scan result.

We check the quality and accuracy of our monitoring scans and if there is any concern about your scan measurements we may invite you for another AAA scan.

How many times will I need to come back?

Small AAA - We will offer you a scan once every year. If after 15 years your AAA remains small, you will not need any more scans. It is unlikely that your AAA will cause any problems.

Medium AAA - We will continue to monitor your AAA every three months. If your AAA becomes large we will refer you to the hospital specialist team for advice on how we can manage your AAA.

What happens if my AAA increases in size?

If your small AAA grows to become a medium AAA, you will have to have an ultrasound scan once every three months. If your AAA grows by 1cm or more in a year, we will refer you to the hospital specialist team who will offer advice and talk to you about your options for managing your AAA.

If your medium AAA grows to become a large AAA, we will refer you to a hospital specialist team who will offer advice and talk to you about your options.

What happens if my AAA decreases in size?

It is unlikely that your AAA will decrease in size. If this happens and the measurement changes we will discuss this with you.

Small and Medium AAA - your result

Why can't I have an operation now?

All operations have some risks and the operation for an AAA is no different. An operation for a small or medium AAA has a lot more risks than the AAA itself, so the best way to control your small or medium AAA is to live a healthier lifestyle and follow the advice of your GP.

If your small or medium AAA grows to a large AAA, the risk of it rupturing can become greater than the risk of an operation, so surgery may then be considered.

Can I do anything to stop the AAA getting bigger?

There are some things you can do that **may** slow the growth of your AAA.

- If you are a smoker, stop smoking. Find the support you need by calling Help Me Quit on **0800 085 2219**
- Make sure your blood pressure is normal. If you have not had it measured recently, get it checked by your GP.



These are some other things that can also improve your general health.

- Have a healthy, balanced diet.
- If you are overweight, try to lose weight.
- Take regular exercise.
- If you drink alcohol, reduce the amount you drink.

Your GP practice will be able to give you advice on all of the above.

You do not need to make any other changes to your lifestyle. You should continue to be physically active and enjoy any hobbies. Contact your GP if you have any concerns.

If you change address, you should tell the local screening office as soon as possible.

Small and Medium AAA - your result

What about close family?

The risk of having an AAA increases if your brother, sister or parent has, or has had, an abdominal aortic aneurysm. Tell any brothers, sisters or children that your AAA means that they are also at risk and should speak to their GP for advice.

What about driving?

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) is responsible for deciding whether people can drive on the basis of their health or any conditions they may have. If you are a bus, coach or lorry driver, you must tell the DVLA if you have an AAA of any size. Latest information can be found on the GOV.UK website.

www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

What about health-related insurance?

If you declare your AAA when applying for travel or any other health-related insurance you may be charged an additional premium or have the condition excluded from cover. When looking for cover, a broker can help. The British Insurance Brokers Association operates a 'find a broker' service. Visit www.biba.org.uk or call 0370 950 1790.

It is extremely unlikely that a small or medium AAA will rupture, but it is important that you are aware of any symptoms of a ruptured AAA. If you have been diagnosed with an AAA and have **new symptoms of severe, persistent abdominal or lower back pain (or both)**, you should go to an accident and emergency department immediately. Make sure you tell any medical staff that you have an AAA found through screening.

Small & Medium AAA - Your result

How can I find out more?

For more information about anything in this leaflet:

- call the local screening office on
 - South East Wales: 01443 23 51 61**
 - South West Wales: 01792 45 31 62**
 - North Wales: 01492 86 35 63**
- contact your GP; or
- visit phw.nhs.wales/aaa-screening

You can also get information and support from the Circulation Foundation. This is a UK charity for people who have diseases of the veins and arteries, known as vascular diseases, including AAA.

Circulation Foundation:

Phone: 020 7205 7151

www.circulationfoundation.org.uk

