

A Helpful Therapy Program Designed Specifically for Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD): Get SET for PAD!

What can you do about painful cramping in one or both of your legs, leg numbness, or weakness in your legs? If your doctor has told you that you have Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD), there is a Medicare-covered therapy program that is designed to help.

What is PAD? It is a problem with the circulation that causes narrowing of the blood vessels in your legs. As a result of this narrowing, not enough blood flows to your legs when you are up moving around, so the symptoms show up most often with walking. Typical symptoms include painful cramping in one or both legs and leg numbness or weakness, as mentioned above.

What causes PAD? Smoking, diabetes, obesity, family history, or a history of coronary artery disease can all be contributing factors to developing Peripheral Artery Disease.

What is the therapy program that helps? The Supervised Exercise Therapy (SET) Program is specifically designed to address the symptoms of PAD by improving how you experience those symptoms and by delaying the onset or worsening of the symptoms.

As of April 3, 2018, physicians are able to order SET for their patients with PAD at Allina Health – Owatonna Hospital. These services are provided in the outpatient Cardiac Rehab department at the hospital. Up to 36 sessions over a 12 week period are covered by Medicare if all of the following components of a SET program are met.

The SET program for treatment of PAD must:

- consist of sessions lasting 30-60 minutes comprising a therapeutic exercise-training program for PAD in patients with pain and/or cramping in the lower leg due to inadequate blood flow to the muscles;
- be conducted in a hospital outpatient setting, or a physician's office; and
- be delivered by qualified personnel necessary to ensure benefits exceed harms, and who are trained in exercise therapy for PAD

You must have a face-to-face visit with the physician responsible for ordering this PAD treatment to obtain the referral for SET, per Medicare requirements. At this visit, your physician will give you information regarding cardiovascular disease and PAD risk factor reduction, which could include education, counseling, behavioral interventions, and outcome assessments.

The SET program is not designed to help people who have conditions that make it unwise to exercise as determined by their primary attending physician, which might include:

- Unstable cardiovascular disease such as critical limb ischemia, unstable angina, decompensated heart failure, uncontrolled cardiac arrhythmias, severe symptomatic valvular heart disease, hemodynamic instability at rest or in response to exercise
- Non-cardiovascular disabilities, such as orthopedic, neurologic, or mental impairment

This is why it is important that you meet with your physician to explore whether the Supervised Exercise Therapy program for Peripheral Artery Disease is appropriate for you.

Feel free to contact Cassandra Hytjan at the Cardiac Rehab Department at Allina Health - Owatonna Hospital with any questions or for more information on this program. She can be reached at 507-977-2168 Monday through Friday.