

An Overview of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme

An abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is a widening of the main artery in the body, as it passes through the abdomen(stomach). The walls of the artery weaken, causing it to balloon out. It is more common in older men, smokers, people with high blood pressure and people with other cardiovascular diseases.

Around 1 in 80 men screened in Northern Ireland at age 65 has an AAA. The aneurysm usually causes no symptoms and most people are not aware they have it. Not every aneurysm will burst, but if it does, the chances of getting to hospital and surviving surgery are very poor. A burst AAA leads to serious internal bleeding, which is fatal in 8 out of 10 cases

The Northern Ireland AAA Screening Programme offers AAA screening to all men who are registered with a GP in the year they turn 65 (1 April to 31 March). Men over the age of 65, who have not previously been scanned as part of the programme or been told they have an aneurysm can self-refer to the programme.

The overall aim of the Northern Ireland AAA Screening Programme is to reduce deaths from burst abdominal aortic aneurysms through early detection, monitoring and treatment.

A series of information leaflets is available on the publications section of this website by clicking [here](#).

For more information on AAA screening please also see [NI Direct Website](#).

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