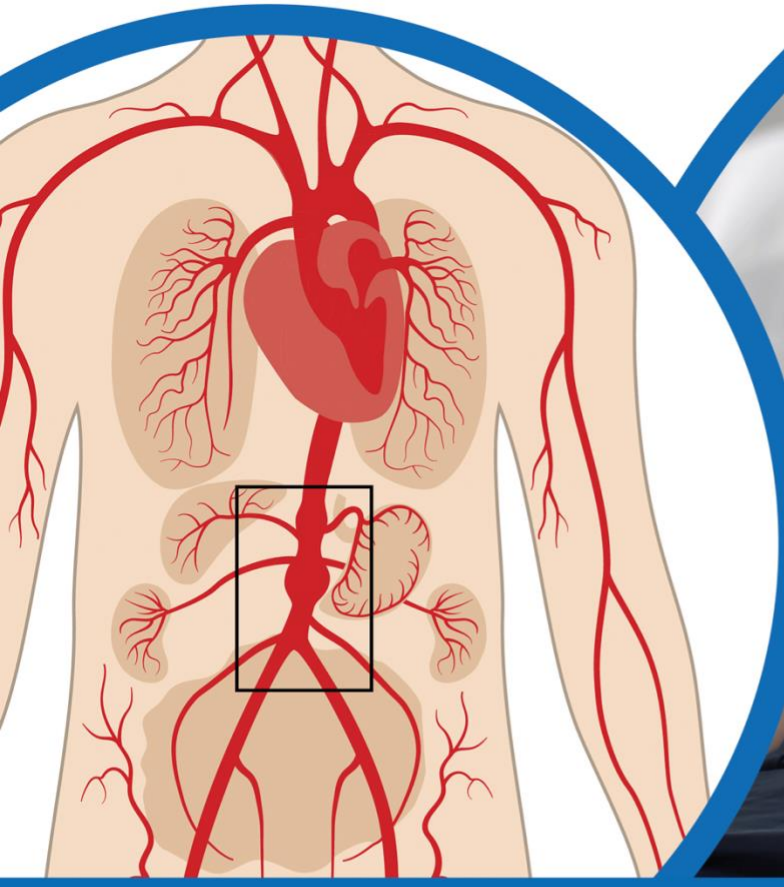
NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening

Frequently Asked Questions



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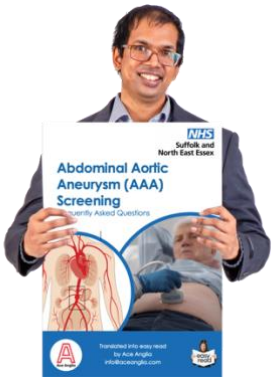
easy read



About this booklet

This is an easy read booklet about Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm screening.

- Section 1
- Section 2
- Section 3
- Section 4

We have split this booklet into sections to make it easier to read.

Blue Words

The words in **blue** are ones we think need to be explained.

We explain what the blue words mean.

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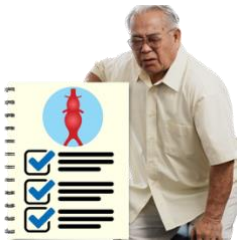

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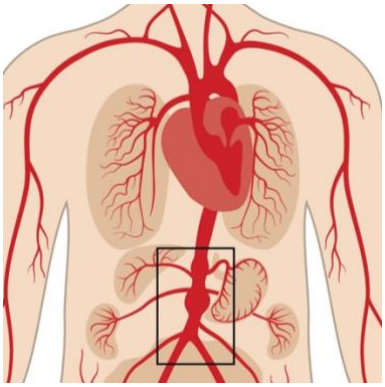
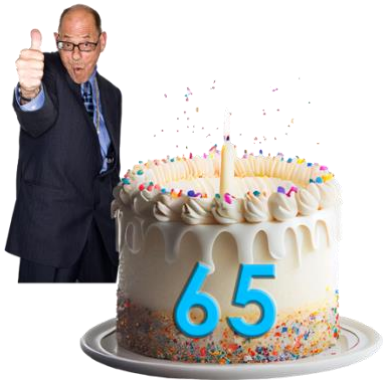
What is Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening?

AAA screening checks if there's a swelling or bulge in the **abdominal aorta**.

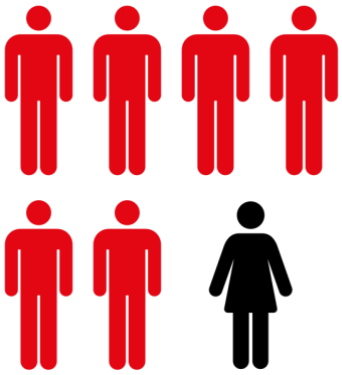


The **abdominal aorta** is the main blood vessel that goes from your heart to your tummy.

Who is screened for Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)?



Screening is offered to men when they turn 65.



This is because men are 6 times more likely to have an AAA than women.

Will I be invited to AAA screening if I was assigned female at birth?

Yes, you will be invited to AAA screening if you are registered with your GP as male.

If you are registered with your GP as female, you will not be invited to AAA screening.

Do I need AAA screening if I was assigned female at birth?

No, you do not need AAA screening, but you can have it if you want.

Will I be invited to AAA screening if I was assigned male at birth?

Yes, you will be invited to AAA screening if you are registered with your GP as male.

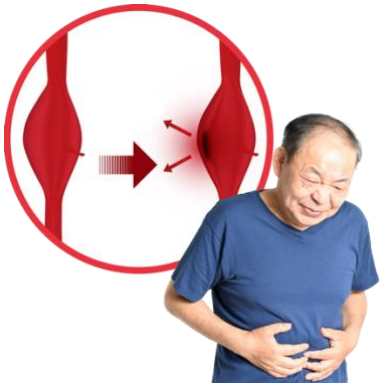
If you are registered with your GP as female, you will not be invited to AAA screening.

Do I need AAA screening if I was assigned male at birth?

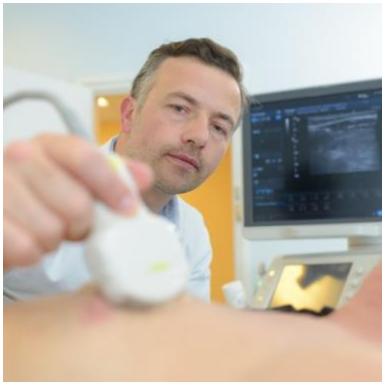
Yes, you need AAA screening.

Why should I have an Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) screening?

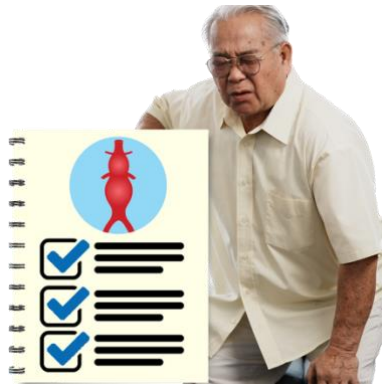
There are no early symptoms of AAA.



It can be serious if not spotted early on, it could get bigger and eventually burst.



It is important to go to AAA screening to spot it early.



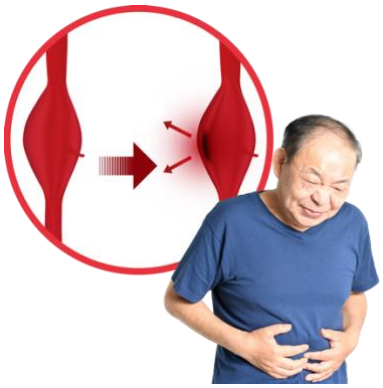
Symptoms of Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA)

As the AAA gets bigger symptoms include:

- a pulsing sensation (like a heartbeat) near the tummy button

- tummy pain that doesn't go away

- lower back pain that doesn't go away



If the Aneurysm bursts it would cause:

- sudden and severe pain in the tummy or lower back

- dizziness, fainting or passing out

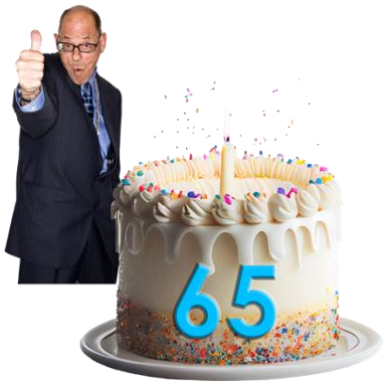
- sweaty and pale clammy skin

- fast heartbeat and shortness of breath

If you experience these symptoms call 999 for an ambulance.

How do I get my screening appointment?

If you are a man and have a GP surgery you go to, you will get a screening invitation in the post.



You will be invited when you're 64 or just after your 65th birthday.

You can then arrange your appointment.

This is because research shows that AAA can affect men at this age.

What happens if I'm over 65 and haven't had my screening appointment?

You can speak with your GP who will help you get in contact with your local screening service.

What happens at the appointment?

Screening involves a quick and painless ultrasound scan of your tummy.

You will lie down on a bed and lift your top so that the person scanning can rub a clear gel on your tummy.

This may feel cold, but is painless.

They will move a small scanner over your tummy which will take pictures on a screen.

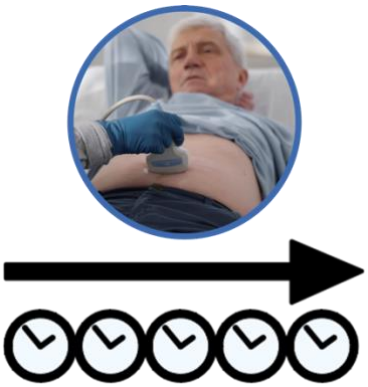
You will then have the gel wiped away and your appointment has now finished.

I have a learning disability and I think I will need extra help

If you need any extra help, then are things we can do to make screening easier for you.

We offer:

- Easy read information



- Longer appointments

- Reminders by text messages

Five River AAA Screening can offer you other things as well if you live in Ipswich or East Suffolk:

- A member of staff to help you during your screening appointment

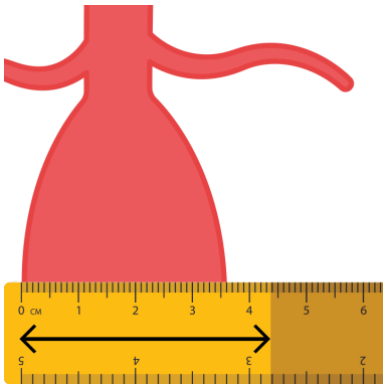
- Sending extra reminders

- Afternoon appointments if you used public transport

Cambridge, Peterborough, and West Suffolk AAA screening service can offer you other things as well:

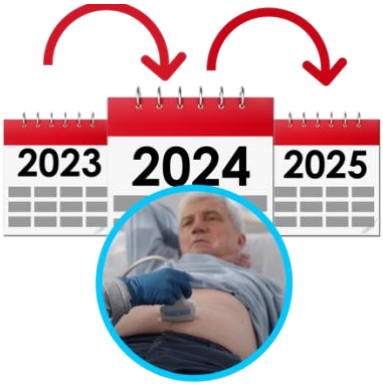
- Quieter waiting rooms

What does it mean if I have been told I have a small aneurysm?



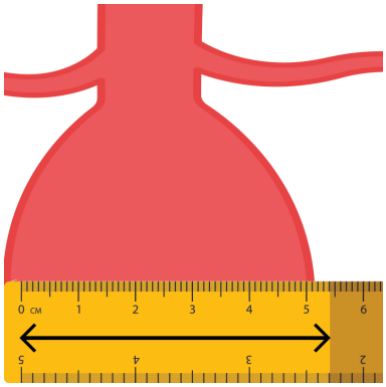
This means your aorta measures 3cm to 4.4cm across.

You will not need any treatment because your risk of the AAA bursting is small.



You'll be invited back for a scan every year to check the size.

What does it mean if I have been told I have a medium aneurysm?

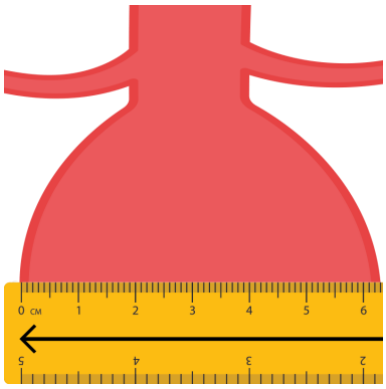


This means your aorta measures 4.5cm to 5.4cm across.

You will not need any treatment at this stage because your risk of the AAA bursting is small.

You'll be invited back for a scan every 3 months to check the size.

What does it mean if I have been told I have a large aneurysm?



This means your aorta measures 5.5cm or more across.

This means there is a higher risk of your AAA bursting if it is not treated.

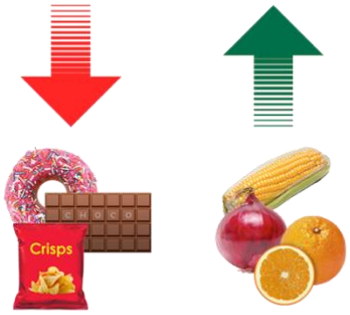
You will be referred to a surgeon within 2 weeks to talk about treatment.

You may need to have surgery to stop your AAA from getting bigger or bursting.

How can I look after my health if I have an AAA?

- If you are a smoker, cut down or stop smoking.

- Make sure you have your blood pressure taken if it hasn't been checked recently.



- Eat a healthy diet and cut down on fatty foods.

- Exercise regularly.

- If you drink alcohol, keep within sensible limits

Who can I talk to if I'm worried?

Screening Centre

Your GP

NHS Website

This screening booklet was co-produced by:

- Ace Anglia
- East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust
- Suffolk GP Federation

This booklet was translated into easy read by Ace Anglia.

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