

# Ankle Brachial Pressure Index

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## What is it?

An Ankle Brachial Pressure Index (ABPI) is a test used to assess the arterial circulation in your legs (how well the blood is getting from your heart to your feet).

## Why have you been referred for this test?

Your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional suspects you may have a problem with the circulation in your legs.

You may have had symptoms such as:

- Achy/painful/heavy legs when walking, that is relieved when you stop
- Pain/cramps at night time or when you raise your legs up
- Ulcers on your legs

This test will give an indication of whether there is a narrowing or a blockage in the arteries in your legs (affecting the circulation), and this may be the reason for your symptoms.

## What happens during the test?

The test will be carried out in one of our examination rooms. You will be asked to remove your shoes, socks and any clothing that prevents access to your lower legs and feet. You will be asked to lie-down on a coach, however if this is not possible the test can be carried out with you sitting in a chair with your legs elevated.

The scientist will take the blood pressure in your arm and at your ankle. The scientist will also listen to the pulses in your feet with a small ultrasound device, called a Doppler. You will hear sounds coming from the small device that represent the blood flow through your arteries in your feet.

You may be asked to walk on a treadmill, along a corridor or perform calf raises for up to 3 minutes. This is called an exercise test. The scientist will then repeat the blood pressure readings in your feet and arms. The purpose of this is to see if exercise/activity has an affect on the circulation in your legs.

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Please note: you will not be made to exercise if do not wish too or can not. If you do carry out the exercise test, you will be asked to walk only, not run, and at a speed you are comfortable with.

The test takes 30-40 minutes. At the end of the test the operator will inform you of the results and what will happen next.

If you are attending your appointment from home, you are usually free to go home after the test.

### **Leg dressings**

The equipment used to carry out the test needs to be in contact with your skin. Therefore, it is likely we will need to remove legs dressings if you have any. Unfortunately if dressings are removed we are not able to re-dress your legs fully. We can temporarily dress your legs but you will need to schedule to have your legs re-dressed properly the same day through your usual route (this may be a district nurse or at your GP surgery).

If this isn't possible then we will work around the dressing as best we can.

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