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AN AFFILIATE OF TEXAS HEART INSTITUTE

ARTERIAL DUPLEX SCAN OF THE LOWER EXTREMITIES

What is it?

The Lower Extremity Arterial Doppler study is a simple two part test to detect blockage of the blood vessels in the legs. The arteries which supply the legs begin in the abdomen about the level of your navel.

What do I do?

Bowel substance and gas can prevent the technologist from getting the most accurate information. Since it is very important for your abdomen to be free of contents as well as gas, it is very important to follow instructions given by the office personnel. Here are some instructions that may help.

- Take all medication as scheduled with only a sip of water.
- Do not smoke or chew gum before the test, as this causes gas in the abdomen.
- Take a laxative at noon the day before the test.
- Take one or two gas pills about one (1) hour before your test.

What will happen?

You will remove your shoes, socks and slacks and lie on your back with your head slightly elevated. The technologist places gel on your skin and glides a "knob or paddle" called a probe, over your abdomen and down each leg in turn. You should not feel any discomfort from the exam.

The second part of this exam is performed using a specialized blood pressure machine. The technologist will place four (4) cuffs on each leg, one (1) on your upper thigh, one (1) on your upper calf, and one (1) just above the ankle. With an instrument that looks very similar to a pencil, the technologist will obtain a signal from your blood vessels.

- The technologist will obtain a blood pressure in each cuff. Some discomfort should be expected with this part of the exam.
- The technologist will pump up two (2) cuffs at a time to a snug fit in order to get a blood volume reading. No pain is normally reported.
- The technologist will place the "pencil" like instrument at different levels of your leg to get a signal print out of your arteries. During this stage of the test, you have mild discomfort.

How long does it take?

The test takes one to two (1-2) hours.