The NHS Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA) Screening Programme was implemented throughout England between 2009 and 2013.

Research shows that offering men ultrasound screening in their 65th year should reduce the rate of premature death from ruptured AAA by up to 50 per cent.

**Structure and delivery**

The NHS AAA Screening Programme is coordinated and led nationally by Public Health England. Screening services are delivered locally in line with national quality standards and protocols.

There are around 40 local screening services covering the whole of England.

Each local service coordinates screening for the population in its area and organises invitation letters, screening and surveillance clinics, results letters and referrals to the appropriate vascular network.

The local screening services ensure GPs are informed when men from their practice have been screened and of the outcomes of their screening test.

**Prevalence**

- Around 3,000 deaths each year in men aged 65 and over in England and Wales from ruptured AAA
- Deaths from ruptured AAA account for 1.7% of all deaths in men aged 65 and over
- Around one in 70 men aged 65 in England has an AAA

**Risk factors**

- The main risk factors are age and being male; two out of every three deaths from ruptured AAA in England and Wales occur in men who are over 65
- The condition is six times more common in men than women
- Risk is increased by smoking, high blood pressure or through close family history
### Normal (985 in 1,000 men)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
<th>Primary Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aortic diameter Less than 3cm No aneurysm detected</td>
<td>No treatment or further scans required Man discharged from screening programme</td>
<td>GP informed of outcome by letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Small or medium aneurysm (14 in 1,000 men)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aortic diameter measures:</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
<th>Primary Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 3 to 4.4cm (Small aneurysm) | Man offered yearly surveillance | GP is informed, by letter, of the outcomes of screening and appointment with nurse Review and prescribing of medication may be appropriate Patient may require regular blood pressure monitoring Steps patient can take which may slow growth of the aneurysm:  
- Eat a healthy balanced diet and reduce intake of fatty foods  
- Stop smoking  
- Maintain a healthy weight  
- Take regular exercise |
| 4.5 to 5.4cm (Medium aneurysm) | Man offered three monthly surveillance Appointment with nurse practitioner/vascular nurse offered at or before first surveillance scan | |

### Large aneurysm (1 in 1,000 men)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aortic diameter</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
<th>Primary Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5.5cm or above | Man referred to consultant vascular surgeon within defined and agreed Screening Programme Vascular Network by screening programme coordinator | GP informed by phone call/fax and then by letter Steps patient can take in advance of potential treatment:  
- Eat a healthy balanced diet and reduce intake of fatty foods  
- Stop smoking  
- Maintain a healthy weight |

### Non-visualised

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repeat scan required</th>
<th>Follow-up</th>
<th>Primary Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repeat scan required</td>
<td>Man offered appointment at hospital medical imaging department</td>
<td>GP informed by letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Further information for patients
- **National leaflets** – all men invited receive a copy of a national invitation leaflet. Men who have a small, medium or large aneurysm detected receive additional national information leaflets
- **Local AAA screening programme** – the phone number for the local screening programme is on the invitation and follow-up letters
- **NHS AAA Screening Programme** www.nhs.uk/aaa
- **AAA Screening Patient Decision Aid** – for men who want help in deciding whether to be screened – www.nhs.uk/aaadecisionaid

### Further information for health professionals
- **NHS AAA Screening Programme** – Visit www.nhs.uk/aaa or scan this QR code with your smartphone for further information on the national programme
- **Speak to your local AAA screening programme coordinator**
- **Map of Medicine** – the care pathway for the NHS AAA Screening Programme is published on Map of Medicine. See healthguides.mapofmedicine.com
- **GP Notebook** – online medical information available at www.gpnotebook.co.uk