

For Fall 2006 Calendar

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**African-Americans Have Twice the Risk for Peripheral Arterial Disease,
a Marker for Heart Attack and Stroke**

Interventional Radiologists Offer Free Screenings in September, Vascular Disease Awareness Month

WHO: Research shows that African-Americans are twice as likely to develop clogged leg arteries, known as peripheral arterial disease – a red flag for several life-threatening vascular diseases, such as heart attack (the #1 cause of death in the United States) and stroke (#3). “African-Americans’ increased risk for peripheral arterial disease, or hardening of the arteries, makes them as vulnerable as someone who has smoked a pack of cigarettes a day for 20 years,” stated Harvey Wiener, DO, Legs For Life® Chair. “Early detection and management of peripheral arterial disease, or PAD, can prevent the progression of the disease which can often lead to painful walking, gangrene, amputation, heart attack or stroke.”

Ten million Americans have PAD – clogged or narrowed arteries in the legs due to atherosclerosis. Atherosclerosis is a gradual process in which cholesterol and scar tissue build up, forming a substance called “plaque” that clogs the arteries. Because atherosclerosis is a systemic disease, people with PAD are likely to develop blocked arteries throughout the body, which is why they are at risk for heart attack and stroke. Often the plaque blocks the smaller leg arteries first. As diagnostic and vascular experts, interventional radiologists can intervene early, prevent vascular disease progression and provide non-surgical treatment if needed.

With more than 50 percent of PAD patients asymptomatic or with atypical symptoms, screening is essential for diagnosis. **Get tested if you:**

- Have diabetes
- Smoke now or have ever smoked
- Are over age 50
- Are African-American
- Have a family history of vascular disease, such as PAD, aneurysm, heart attack or stroke
- Have high cholesterol, a high lipid blood test or high blood pressure
- Are overweight
- Have cramping in your leg when walking or exercising, that is relieved by resting

WHAT: *Legs For Life*® has been held annually by the SIR Foundation since September 1998. It is the largest, longest running, and most inclusive national vascular disease screening program in the U.S. Nearly 322,000 people have been screened to date, with one in four found to be at risk for PAD. Select sites will also screen for abdominal aortic aneurysm, stroke risk and venous disease.

The Society of Interventional Radiology is a founding partner of the PAD Coalition which, along with the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI), is launching a national three-year PAD awareness campaign in September called “Stay in Circulation.”

WHERE: Hundreds of screening locations across the country can be found at www.LegsForLife.org, along with disease fact sheets. **Note:** Screenings are free, but conducted by appointment.