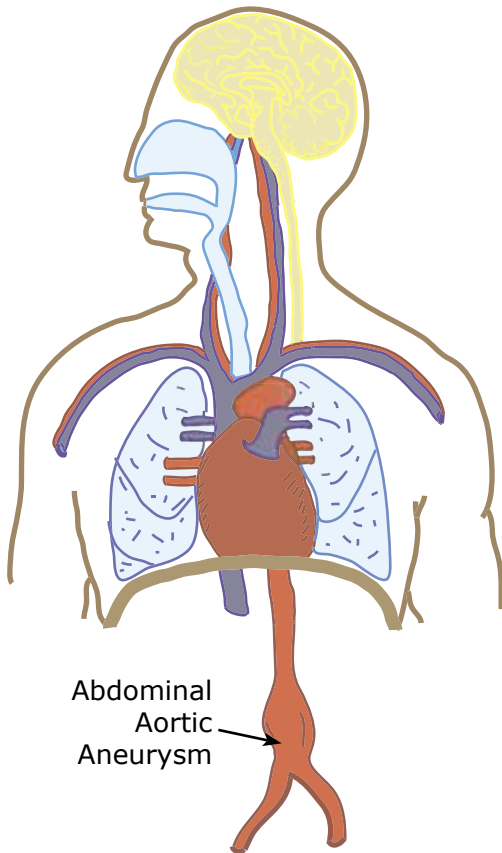


A deep throbbing pain is of concern in anyone but especially in men 50-80 years old as it may indicate a abdominal aortic aneurysm (or Triple A). Begin a Level 1 evacuation.



Aneurysms tend to occur at weak spots in an arterial wall as the patient's blood pressure forces the weak area to bulge and balloon outward. While aneurysms can develop in any artery, the majority occur in the abdominal and thoracic aorta where the pressure is the greatest. Blood flow slows at it passes through an aneurysm and clot formation at the site is common. Once formed, a clot may break off, travel downstream, and become lodged in a small artery cutting off the local blood supply. Large aneurysms may rupture causing internal bleeding and potentially volume shock. A large rupture is usually fatal while a small leak may give enough warning for evacuation and treatment. In addition to or in place of a deep throbbing pain, some patients with abdominal aneurysms report a deep, penetrating pain in their back. Rapidly enlarging aneurysms that are about to rupture commonly hurt or feel tender when pressed during an abdominal examination. Upon rupture, there is usually excruciating pain in the lower abdomen and back and tenderness over the site of the aneurysm. Rapid death from volume shock is common. Evacuation and surgery are the only treatments.