

FMD Patient Dictionary

- **Acute mesenteric ischemia:** the narrowing or blockage of one or more mesenteric arteries, which supply blood flow to the intestines. This condition may result in severe abdominal pain or tissue death in the intestines. Chronic mesenteric ischemia can manifest as abdominal pain after eating.
- **Amaurosis fugax:** a temporary loss of vision in one eye due to a lack of blood flow to the retina.
- **Aneurysm:** an abnormal widening or ballooning of a part of an artery due to weakness in the wall of the blood vessel.
- **Aneurysm surgery:** surgical repair of an aneurysm. This may be done by using a metal clip to block the aneurysm off from the artery (for example for brain aneurysms), or by surgically removing an aneurysm and repairing the diseased area of an artery (for example for renal artery or carotid aneurysms). If an aneurysm is operated upon via an endovascular approach (using a catheter), this process is called coil embolization.
- **Angina:** chest pain or discomfort felt when there is not enough blood flow to the heart muscle.
- **Angiography:** a medical imaging technique used to visualize the inside, or lumen, of blood vessels. This procedure allows your physician to see stenosis (narrowing), dilatation (widening), beading of the artery, and other vascular features.
- **Angioplasty:** an endovascular procedure to widen a narrowed or obstructed artery. An empty, collapsed balloon, known as a balloon catheter, is passed over a wire into the narrowed locations and then inflated to a fixed size. The balloon forces expansion of the stenosis (narrowing) within the vessel and the surrounding muscular wall, opening up the blood vessel for improved flow, and the balloon is then deflated and withdrawn. A stent may or may not be inserted at the time of ballooning to ensure the vessel remains open.
- **Aorta:** the main artery of the human body. It carries oxygenated blood from the heart to smaller arteries that deliver blood to the body.
- **Atherosclerosis:** a disease in which plaque builds up inside the arteries. Plaque is a sticky substance made up of fat, cholesterol, calcium, and other substances found in the blood. Over time, plaque hardens and narrows the arteries. That limits the flow of oxygen-rich blood to the body. Fibromuscular dysplasia is a process that is different than atherosclerosis.
- **Bruit:** an audible vascular sound associated with turbulent blood flow (usually heard with a stethoscope). A physician may listen for bruits on your neck, legs, or abdomen.
- **Bypass surgery:** a procedure that restores blood flow to an organ by diverting the flow of blood around a section of a narrowed or blocked artery. Bypass may be performed using a piece of vein or an artery taken from another area or using prosthetic tube grafts using Goretex or Dacron.
- **Carotid arteries:** arteries in the front of your neck, one located on the right side and one on the left that supply blood to the brain.
- **Catheter:** a thin tube that can be inserted in the body to treat diseases endovascularly.

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- **Catheter-based angiography:** an X-ray test that uses a special dye and camera (fluoroscopy) to take pictures of the blood flow in an artery. During an angiogram, a thin tube called a catheter is placed into the femoral artery in the groin, just above the elbow (brachial artery), or at the wrist (radial artery). The catheter is guided to the area to be studied. Then an iodine dye (contrast material) is injected into the vessel to make the area show clearly on the X-ray pictures.
- **Cerebrovascular:** Pertaining to the blood vessels, the arteries that supply blood to the brain.
- **Cervical:** of or relating to the neck.
- **Claudication:** a condition in which cramping pain in the arms or legs is induced by exercise, typically caused by obstruction of the arteries, and is relieved within a short period of time (such as within 10 minutes) with rest.
- **Coil embolization:** an endovascular procedure used to treat aneurysms. A catheter is used to place a small coil of wire inside the aneurysm, blocking it off from the rest of the blood vessel.
- **Common iliac artery:** located just to the left of the midline in the lower abdomen. This is where the abdominal aorta divides into two separate arteries supplying blood to the legs (external iliac artery) and to the pelvis, gluteus, and external genitalia (internal iliac artery).
- **Computed tomography angiography (CTA):** CT imaging ("CAT scan") of the blood vessels. The CTA procedure is non-invasive and can be used to confirm a diagnosis or determine the severity of a problem with the blood vessels. CTA requires the injection of a contrast dye into an IV as pictures are taken.
- **Coronary:** relating to the arteries that surround and supply the heart muscle.
- **Creatinine blood test:** measures the level of creatinine in the blood. This test is done to see how well the kidneys function.
- **Dissection:** occurs when a small tear forms in the innermost lining of the arterial wall. Blood is then able to enter the space between the inner and outer layers of the vessel, causing narrowing (stenosis) or complete blockage (occlusion).
- **Dyspnea:** difficult or labored breathing (shortness of breath).
- **Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS):** a group of inherited disorders that affect the connective tissue (e.g. skin, joints, and blood vessels). Vascular EDS, a severe form of the disorder, can cause serious problems with blood vessels. While EDS is not directly related to FMD, it is a condition that can have some similar manifestations as FMD, such as aneurysms and dissections of arteries.
- **Endarterectomy:** the surgical removal of part of the inner lining of an artery; this procedure is often done to remove atherosclerosis or plaque and is not generally performed to treat FMD.
- **Endovascular:** "from inside blood vessels." To perform endovascular procedures, vascular specialists use special technologies and instruments. These procedures require only a small incision or puncture in an artery or vein and placement of catheters to image the vessels and treat narrowings or aneurysms and are generally considered "minimally invasive."
- **Fibromuscular Dysplasia (FMD):** a disease that causes the abnormal development or growth of cells in the walls of arteries that can cause the vessels to narrow or have a beaded appearance, or bulge.
- **Focal FMD (intimal FMD):** The less common type of FMD that consists of a single narrowing in an

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- **Horner's Syndrome:** a disorder caused by damage to nerves of the eye and face. Symptoms include drooping of the upper eyelid, decreased pupil size in the affected eye, and decreased or absent sweating on the affected side of the face.
- **Hyperlipidemia:** an abnormally high concentration of cholesterol or lipids in the blood.
- **Hypertension:** high blood pressure. The blood pressure is highest when the heart beats, pumping the blood. This is called systolic pressure (top number). When the heart is at rest, between beats, the blood pressure falls (bottom number). This is called diastolic pressure. High blood pressure is blood pressure of 140/90 mm Hg or greater.
- **Infarction:** death of tissue due to lack of oxygen (often caused by lack of blood flow to tissue).
- **Intimal fibroplasia:** an older term used for focal FMD.
- **Intracranial:** inside the skull.
- **Intravascular ultrasound (IVUS):** a medical imaging technique using a specially designed catheter with a miniaturized ultrasound probe attached to the far end of the catheter. The end of the catheter closest to the operator is attached to computerized ultrasound equipment, which allows the operator to see inside of the vasculature. IVUS is usually performed at the same time as angiography.
- **Ischemia:** condition of not having enough blood supply to an organ or part of the body.
- **Loeys-Dietz Syndrome:** a recently-described connective tissue disorder with features similar to those of Marfan syndrome, and the vascular type of Ehlers-Danlos syndrome. Loeys-Dietz syndrome is primarily characterized by aneurysms of the aorta and other arteries.
- **Magnetic resonance angiography (MRA):** a special type of MRI to image the blood vessels. The MRA procedure is non-invasive and can be used to confirm a diagnosis or determine the severity of a problem with the blood vessels. An MRA provides a better picture of blood vessels than a regular MRI. MRA studies may or may not be performed by the injection of a special dye.
- **Marfan's Syndrome:** a connective tissue disorder that may affect the heart, eyes, blood vessels, or the skeleton. Individuals with Marfan's syndrome are at a greater risk for vascular events like dissection or aneurysm.
- **Medial fibroplasia:** an older term for Multifocal FMD.
- **Mesenteric arteries:** arteries which supply the stomach, liver, spleen, and intestines with blood.
- **Multifocal FMD (medial FMD):** FMD with a "string of beads" appearance from alternating widened and narrowed sections of artery. This is the more common type of FMD (previously known as medial FMD).
- **Myocardial infarction (MI):** heart attack. Caused by a lack of blood flow to the heart muscle. MI is diagnosed on the basis of symptoms, EKG changes, and blood work showing evidence of infarction.
- **Post prandial:** after eating.
- **Pseudoaneurysm (false aneurysm):** a collection of blood that forms as the result of a leaking hole in an artery. It forms outside the arterial wall, so it is contained by the surrounding tissues. Pseudoaneurysms may form as a result of a vascular dissection.

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- **Pulsatile tinnitus (abnormal swooshing sound in ears):** a noise in the ears that accompanies one's pulse.
- **Renal failure:** failure of the kidneys to properly filter the blood. Severe renal failure can require dialysis to artificially filter the blood.
- **Renal:** of or relating to the kidneys.
- **Revascularization:** the restoration of perfusion to a body part or organ that has suffered ischemia or has a severe stenosis (narrowing). Vascular bypass and angioplasty are the two primary means of revascularization.
- **Ruptured aneurysm:** releases blood into the surrounding tissue. When it occurs in the arteries of the brain, it can result in a subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH).
- **Stenosis:** narrowing of an artery.
- **Stent:** a small mesh tube that is used with angioplasty to treat narrow or weak arteries.
- **Stroke:** happens when blood flow to the brain stops. Within minutes, brain cells begin to die. There are two kinds of stroke. The most common, called ischemic stroke is caused by a blood clot that blocks or plugs a blood vessel in the brain. The other kind, called hemorrhagic stroke, is caused by a blood vessel that breaks and bleeds into the brain, such as a ruptured aneurysm.
- **Subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH):** the presence of blood in the subarachnoid space of the brain (between the layers of tissue covering the brain) due to a vessel rupturing just outside the brain. Symptoms may include sudden, intense headache, neck pain, nausea, vomiting or rapid loss of consciousness.
- **Thrombosis:** local coagulation or clotting of the blood in a part of the circulatory system, also known as a "blood clot".
- **Tinnitus (non-pulsatile):** noise or ringing in the ears that does not accompany heart beat (nonpulsatile).
- **Transient ischemic attack (TIA):** symptoms of a stroke that come and go quickly. It happens when the blood supply to part of the brain stops briefly. Symptoms of a TIA are like other stroke symptoms, but do not last as long or leave lasting consequences (like paralysis). Sometimes called a "mini-stroke."
- **Ultrasound:** medical imaging with sound waves. When combined with "Doppler" measurements of blood flow, it is called duplex ultrasound.
- **Vascular:** of or relating to the blood vessels.
- **Vertebral arteries:** Two arteries that run along the neck vertebrae (spine in your neck) and deliver blood to the brain (along with the carotid arteries).

Updated June, 2016