

# Interactive map highlights peripheral artery disease amputation risks, experts call for action

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The PAD Collaborative has released an interactive online [heat map](#) to highlight the risk of non-traumatic lower limb amputations, a severe

complication of peripheral artery disease (PAD). This new tool, designed to help prevent PAD, reduce complications and improve the quality of life for those affected, offers specific data for each state.

Statistics [show](#) that in many areas of the U.S. there is a critical need for improved health care services, screening and education for people at risk or affected by PAD, as well as for the health professionals caring for them.

The PAD Collaborative, convened by the American Heart Association, includes 17 organizations dedicated to raising awareness, advancing education, promoting research, improving treatment and advocating for PAD.

Peripheral artery disease is caused by plaque buildup in the peripheral arteries, reducing blood flow, typically to the legs and feet. This condition affects more than 10–12 million people in the U.S., with Black adults twice as likely to develop PAD.

According to the American Heart Association, individuals who have diabetes, [high blood pressure](#), or those who smoke are at higher risk for PAD. These health conditions can lead to amputations of toes, feet, or legs if not managed. Annually, 150,000 non-traumatic leg amputations [occur](#) in the U.S.

The Non-Traumatic Lower Extremity Amputations by Congressional District Heat Map incorporates publicly available 2017 and 2018 data from Medicare and the U.S. Census Bureau on relative rates of lower limb amputation, both geographically and by U.S. Congressional district. High risk states include Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and South Carolina, with Mississippi having the highest risk.

Systemic barriers place those in [rural areas](#), as well as Black, Native

American, and low socioeconomic status populations, at the greatest risk of amputation. According to leading experts in PAD, screening and management are crucial to preventing amputations, along with enhancing care systems, research and health policies.

"Increasing knowledge surrounding [peripheral artery disease](#) and the potential complication of lower limb amputation is vital, especially considering many people who are at high risk don't even know what PAD is," said Marc Bonaca, M.D., M.P.H, cardiologist and vascular medicine specialist, CPC Clinical Research and CPC Community Health.

Dr. Bonaca is currently the Center Director and Clinical Project Principal Investigator of the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dartmouth Hitchcock Center in the American Heart Association Strategically Focused Research Network in Peripheral Vascular Disease.

The lower limb amputation heat map will serve as a tool for health care professionals to become aware of what the amputation data looks like in their region. Professionals and health care systems can use that information when considering the need for patient and staff education, health programs, community screenings and outreach concerning research and advocacy.

"Much of the [amputation](#) data we are seeing is not surprising, yet the map helps us confirm and illustrate what we suspected in terms of where the biggest issues are," said Bonaca. "When patients with PAD and their health teams advocate for themselves, we can share a firm message that this is a public health issue, and it is preventable."

Provided by American Heart Association

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