Awareness events to highlight the simple scan that saves lives

NHS Ayrshire & Arran is holding awareness events throughout Ayrshire to remind men to take up the offer of a simple scan which can detect a condition that affects one in 20 men aged 65.

Letters are posted letters to men aged 65, inviting them to attend a simple ultrasound scan which can detect abdominal aortic aneurysms, a condition that can affect the main artery in the abdomen (stomach). The Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Screening Programme is Scotland’s first male-only national screening programme.

To encourage more men to take up the offer, awareness events offering more information about the screening programme are being held on:

- Thursday 22 October in William Hill, Dalmilling, Ayr
- Thursday 22 October in Tesco, Kilmarnock
- Friday 23 October in William Hill, Mount Oliphant Crescent, Ayr
- Monday 26 October in William Hill, Main Street, Ayr
- Tuesday 27 October in Asda, Kilmarnock
- Thursday 29 October in William Hill, Nelson Street, Kilmarnock
- Friday 30 October in William Hill, The Cross, Kilmarnock
- Monday 9 November in Tesco, Kilmarnock

Mr Iain McMillan, Vascular Consultant, said: "Abdominal aortic aneurysms are a hidden killer. They affect one in 20 men in Scotland, most of whom will be unaware that they have the condition.

"Sadly, the first sign of a problem for many men will be when the aneurysm ruptures and, by that time, it's often too late – if left unscreened more than 8 in 10 ruptures can prove fatal."
"But a simple 10-minute scan can detect the aneurysm, enabling treatment to begin and saving hundreds of lives each year. Identification of this disease will mean that the individual can be monitored and referred to treatment services at the right time.

“The scan is quick and painless. I strongly urge men to attend their invitation for an abdominal aortic aneurysm screening.”

An abdominal aortic aneurysm forms when the aorta, the main artery that supplies blood to the body from the heart down through the chest and abdomen, becomes weak and balloons out. This process can lead to rupture of the aorta which is often fatal. An ultrasound scan can detect an aneurysm, with results made available instantly after the scan.

If the scan is normal, men will then exit the screening programme – as the chance of a man developing an aneurysm following screening is extremely low.

If a small or medium aneurysm is found, regular scans will be offered to monitor the size. If a larger aneurysm is found, a referral will be made to vascular services.

Ends

Notes to editors

- The first sign of a problem for many men will be when the aneurysm ruptures;
- The condition mainly affects older men. Self-referral is available for men aged 66 onwards through their local abdominal aortic aneurysm screening office, who will help arrange a screening appointment;
- Operations available to treat large aneurysms, if that is a recommended option, also have risks and can sometimes result in serious complications, leading to death;
- Men are invited to attend through a postal invite and information leaflet – and are being encouraged to make an informed decision about having the scan;
- Men themselves, and other members of the public, can find out more information by:
- Reading the information leaflet that accompanies invites;
Media
information
For immediate use

- Visiting Screening Scotland, www.nhsinform.org/screening; or
- Speaking to their GP.
- It is estimated that this programme will help save 170 lives across Scotland each year.

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