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Aortic aneurysm

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Definition

By Mayo Clinic staff

An aortic aneurysm is a weakened and bulging area in the aorta, the major blood vessel that feeds blood to the body. The aorta, about the thickness of a garden hose, runs from your heart through the center of your chest and abdomen. Because the aorta is the body's main supplier of blood, a ruptured aortic aneurysm can cause life-threatening bleeding. Although you may never have symptoms, finding out you have an aortic aneurysm can be frightening.

Most small and slow-growing aortic aneurysms don't rupture, but large, fast-growing aortic aneurysms may. Depending on the size and rate at which the aortic aneurysm is growing, treatment may vary from watchful waiting to emergency surgery. Once an aortic aneurysm is found, doctors will closely monitor it so that surgery can be planned if it's necessary. Emergency surgery for a ruptured aneurysm can be risky.



Symptoms

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