



DISCLAIMER: The information, including but not limited to, text, graphics, images and other material contained are for informational purposes only. Not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Saint John Vein Clinic 506-648-7013 or Email: saintjohnveinclinic@gmail.com

Fibromuscular Disease

BY DR. GREGORY J. LANDRY

Fibromuscular disease causes narrowing of arteries throughout your body, most frequently the arteries to the kidneys (renal arteries) and brain (carotid arteries). In rare cases, FMD can affect leg or intestinal arteries.

UNCOMMON

FMD most commonly affects young women of European descent. FMD of the kidney arteries is found in 4–7% of women. FMD of the brain arteries is found in 0.3–3% of women.

LIFE-LONG, SELDOM NEEDS TREATMENT

Though FMD is a life-long condition, it rarely causes symptoms severe enough to treat.

Symptoms

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

If you have FMD involving kidney arteries you are likely to have high blood pressure.

HEADACHES, NECK PAIN, WHOOSHING SOUND

FMD involving brain arteries can cause headaches, a “whooshing” sound in the ear (pulsatile tinnitus), neck pain. In rare cases you may experience stroke symptoms.

PAIN WHILE WALKING OR EATING

In rare cases when FMD affects leg or intestinal arteries, it can, respectively, cause pain with walking or eating.

Causes

The cause of FMD is unknown. Since it most often affects young women of European descent, it is thought that hormonal and genetic factors are involved.

Diagnosis

FMD is usually diagnosed with imaging studies, such as ultrasound, CT scan, MRI, or angiogram .



Treatments

- Taking an aspirin daily is generally recommended to counteract artery narrowing.
- For FMD affecting kidney arteries, high blood pressure can usually be treated with medications. If more treatment is needed, a balloon angioplasty can usually open narrowed arteries.
- Similarly, FMD affecting brain arteries rarely requires treatment, but balloon angioplasty can be effective.
- Rarely, surgery is needed to repair the arteries.

Staying Healthy

There is no known way to prevent FMD. Most people with FMD can live well by taking aspirin daily and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.