

## Patient Information

# Aortic Aneurysm

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Aortic aneurysm is an abnormal enlargement or bulging of the aorta, the body's main blood vessel.
- Aortic aneurysms may lead to serious complications including rupture, which can be life-threatening if not discovered early.
- Risk factors for aortic aneurysms include:
  - male gender
  - age over 60
  - smoking
  - history of aneurysms in other family members

### SYMPTOMS

- Most people with aortic aneurysms do not have symptoms. They are usually discovered by doing a screening ultrasound.
- Symptoms may include pain in the chest or abdomen. Some patients notice a pulsation in the upper part of their abdomen.
- If aneurysms rupture, they are usually very painful and are considered a medical emergency.

### DIAGNOSTIC TESTS

- The most common test used to diagnose aortic aneurysm is an abdominal ultrasound or echocardiogram

### TREATMENT

- Treatment depends on the size of the aneurysm.
- If the aneurysm is less than 5 cm (or 2 inches) and not growing rapidly, your doctor will probably recommend a repeat ultrasound every 6 to 12 months.
- Surgery to repair the aneurysm is generally recommended when they become larger than 5.5 cm as they are at higher risk for rupture.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** or to make an appointment at URMC Cardiology at Highland Hospital, please call (585) 341-6780 or visit us online at [www.highlandheart.urmc.edu](http://www.highlandheart.urmc.edu)