

CAROTID STENOSIS

ANATOMY

Two pairs of arteries supply oxygenated blood to the brain: the carotid and vertebral arteries. One carotid artery goes up each side of the neck to the brain.



WHAT IS CAROTID STENOSIS?

Carotid stenosis is the narrowing of the carotid arteries. This narrowing is primarily the result of the development of atherosclerosis (fatty plaque, fibrous tissue, and calcium deposits on the artery wall) and associated cardiovascular risk factors.

WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

- Smoking
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Overweight
- Lack of physical activity
- Diet high in salt
- History of atherosclerosis
- Family history of heart disease

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF CAROTID STENOSIS?

Carotid stenosis can be asymptomatic, which means without symptoms. Asymptomatic carotid stenosis is discovered during an examination for another medical reason.

Symptoms usually occur when a piece of plaque breaks off and blocks a smaller vessel in the brain. This is called a stroke. During a stroke, part of the brain is deprived of blood, which causes symptoms to appear:

- Numbness
- Weakness
- Speech or vision problems

The symptoms of a stroke may resolve on their own, leaving no aftereffects, or they may have permanent consequences of varying degrees. Treatment of carotid stenosis is aimed at preventing strokes in two ways.

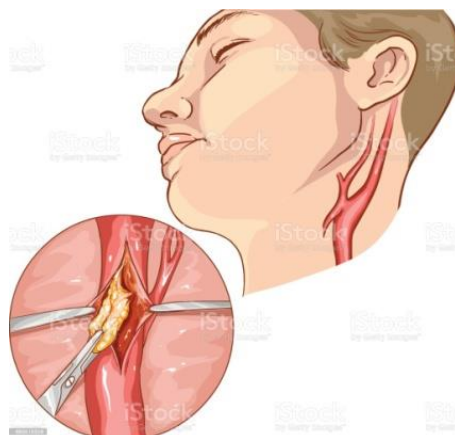
1. MODIFICATION OF LIFESTYLE HABITS

- Quitting smoking
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Staying active
- Changing your diet
- Controlling or preventing:
 - High blood pressure
 - Diabetes
 - High cholesterol

2. CAROTID ENDARTERECTOMY

If the blockage is severe and has recently caused symptoms, your surgeon may suggest removing the plaque causing the blockage. This procedure is called carotid endarterectomy. It is performed under general anesthesia and requires a hospital stay of 24 to 48 hours.

The surgeon will make an incision in your neck to get to the blocked carotid artery. They will open the artery at the site of the blockage and remove the plaque blocking blood flow to the brain. The artery is then closed.



CONVALESCENCE AND RETURN TO NORMAL LIFE

It is normal to feel numbness near your wound. Small nerves get cut during surgery, and it might take a few months for sensation to return. In some cases, the loss of sensation is permanent, but that will not limit your activities. When you return home, you will be able to walk, climb stairs, and perform your activities of daily living. You will be able to engage in all the activities you want starting two weeks after the operation.

It is important to check your blood pressure a few times a day for the two weeks after your surgery. If your blood pressure is repeatedly too high (higher than 140/90), you should contact your family doctor to adjust your medication. If you have a headache and your blood pressure is high (over 140/90), you should go to the emergency room.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS



Contact our team at 819-346-1110, extension 13085.



If you are concerned about your condition, go to the emergency room.

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Revision and Layout

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