

# Treatment for Carotid Dissection



A carotid dissection is a tear or separation in the inner layer of an artery in the neck. You have a carotid artery on each side of your neck. These arteries send blood to your brain.

## Types of treatment

You may need to be treated in a hospital. Treatment choices depend on the underlying cause, your age, overall health, and symptoms. Treatment may include:

- Clot-busting medicine (thrombolytic), if your dissection caused a stroke
- Heparin to prevent more blood clots
- IV (intravenous) fluids
- Blood pressure medicine
- Insulin or glucose to control your blood sugar
- Pain medicine
- Antiplatelet medicine, such as aspirin
- Blood-thinning medicine, such as warfarin
- Endovascular treatment using stent or balloon placement

You may need to take blood-thinning medicine for 3 to 6 months. At that point, you may need imaging tests. These are done to see how your carotid artery is healing.

If you have carotid dissection again, your healthcare provider may advise you to get other treatment. You may need surgery to put in a stent, or to fix or bypass the artery.

## Call 911

A TIA is often called a "ministroke." It doesn't cause permanent damage, so people often ignore the symptoms. But a TIA may signal a full-blown stroke and needs medical attention right away.

Call 911 if you have symptoms of TIA or stroke. These include:

- Sudden drooping, numbness, or weakness of your face
- Sudden numbness or weakness in an arm or leg
- Sudden trouble speaking
- Sudden confusion
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, lack of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

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