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Carotid Artery Disease

Your carotid arteries are two large blood vessels in your neck. They supply your brain and head with blood. If you have carotid artery disease, the arteries become narrow or blocked, usually because of **atherosclerosis** [https://medlineplus.gov/atherosclerosis.html]. Atherosclerosis is the buildup of plaque, which is made up of fat, cholesterol [https://medlineplus.gov/cholesterol.html], calcium, and other substances found in the blood.

Carotid artery disease is serious because it can block the blood flow to your brain, causing a **stroke** [https://medlineplus.gov/ischemicstroke.html]. Too much plaque in the artery can cause a blockage. You can also have a blockage when a piece of plaque or a blood clot [https://medlineplus.gov/bloodclots.html] breaks off the wall of an artery. The plaque or clot can travel through the bloodstream and get stuck in one of your brain's smaller arteries.

Carotid artery disease often does not cause symptoms until the blockage or narrowing is severe. One sign may be a bruit (whooshing sound) that your doctor hears when listening to your artery with a stethoscope. Another sign is a transient ischemic attack [https://medlineplus.gov/transientischemicattack.html] (TIA), a "mini-stroke." A TIA is like a stroke, but it only lasts a few minutes, and the symptoms usually go away within an hour. Stroke is another sign.

Imaging tests can confirm whether you have carotid artery disease.

Treatments may include:

- Healthy lifestyle changes [https://medlineplus.gov/healthyliving.html]
- Medicines
- Carotid endarterectomy, surgery to remove the plaque
- Angioplasty [https://medlineplus.gov/angioplasty.html], a procedure to place a balloon and stent into the artery to open it and hold it open

NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Start Here

- Carotid Artery Disease [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/carotid-artery-disease/symptoms-causes/syc-20360519?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Carotid Artery Disease [https://www.texasheart.org/heart-health/heart-information-center/topics/carotid-artery-disease/] (Texas Heart Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.texasheart.org/heart-health/heart-information-center/topics/enfermedad-de-las-arterias-carotidas/]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Asymptomatic Carotid Artery Stenosis: Screening [https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation/carotid-artery-stenosis-screening] (U.S. Preventive Services Task Force)
- Carotid Artery Screening [https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/screening-carotid] (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/screening-carotid>]

- Carotid Ultrasound Imaging [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/us-carotid>]

 (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/us-carotid>]

- Doppler Ultrasound [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/doppler-ultrasound/>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/ecografia-doppler/>]

- MR Angiography (MRA) [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/angiomr>]

 (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/angiomr>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Carotid Angioplasty and Stenting [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/carotid-angioplasty-and-stenting/about/pac-20385111?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- Let's Talk about Carotid Endarterectomy [<https://www.stroke.org/en/help-and-support/resource-library/lets-talk-about-stroke/carotid-endarterectomy>] (American Stroke Association)

Specifics

- What Is Atherosclerosis? [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/atherosclerosis>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/aterosclerosis>]

Images

- Carotid artery surgery - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100124_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100124_1.htm]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Carotid Artery Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Carotid+Artery+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Carotid Stenosis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Carotid+Stenosis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Endarterectomy, Carotid [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?intr=carotid+endarterectomy&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

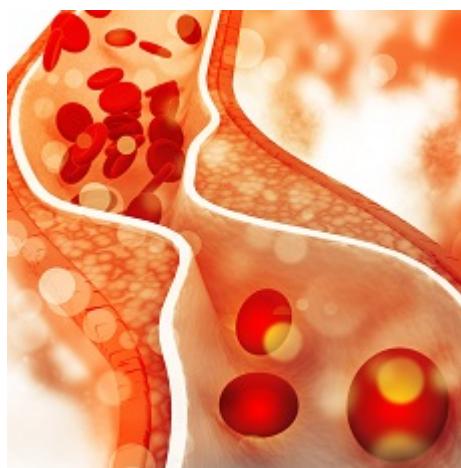
- Article: Impact of biomarkers on carotid artery disease and stroke. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40738952>]
- Article: Association between long-term atherogenic index of plasma and carotid atherosclerosis: a... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40738628>]
- Article: Prolonged periods of shallow sleep are associated with diabetic carotid atherosclerosis. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40685379>]
- Carotid Artery Disease -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Carotid+Artery+Diseases%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- American Stroke Association [<https://www.stroke.org/>]
- National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<https://www.ninds.nih.gov/>] 

Patient Handouts

- Angioplasty and stent placement - carotid artery [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002953.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002953.htm>]
- Carotid artery disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007427.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007427.htm>]
- Carotid artery stenosis - self-care [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000717.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000717.htm>]
- Carotid artery surgery - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000238.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000238.htm>]
- Carotid artery surgery - open [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002951.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002951.htm>]
- Carotid duplex [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003774.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003774.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

[Angioplasty and stent placement - carotid artery](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002953.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002953.htm>]

[Angioplasty and stent placement - carotid artery - discharge](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000235.htm)
[<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000235.htm>]

[Carotid artery disease](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007427.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007427.htm>]

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[Carotid artery surgery - open](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002951.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002951.htm>]

[Carotid artery surgery - series](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100124_1.htm) [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100124_1.htm]

[Carotid duplex](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003774.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003774.htm>]

Related Health Topics

[Atherosclerosis](https://medlineplus.gov/atherosclerosis.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/atherosclerosis.html>]

[Ischemic Stroke](https://medlineplus.gov/ischemicstroke.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ischemicstroke.html>]

[Stroke](https://medlineplus.gov/stroke.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/stroke.html>]

[Transient Ischemic Attack](https://medlineplus.gov/transientischemicattack.html) [<https://medlineplus.gov/transientischemicattack.html>]

The primary NIH organization for research on *Carotid Artery Disease* is the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke [<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/>]

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