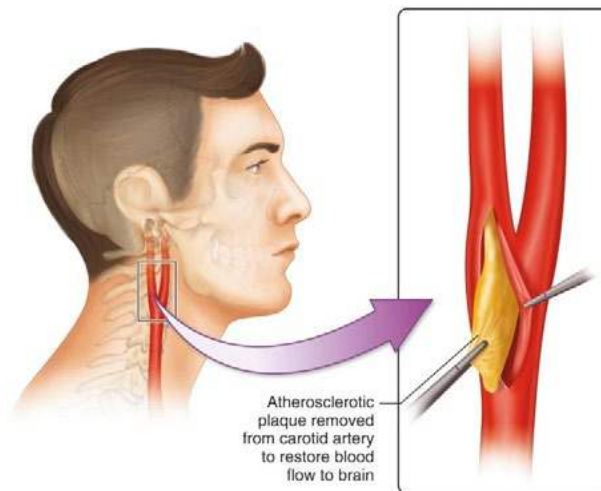


Carotid Endarterectomy

Your carotid arteries are the main source of blood supply to your brain. When plaque builds up in your arteries, they become narrow and reduce blood flow to the brain. Carotid artery disease is one of the leading causes of stroke in the United States, accounting for 20-30% of all ischemic strokes. Once the narrowing becomes severe, your doctor may consider a Carotid Endarterectomy.

A Carotid Endarterectomy is a surgical procedure to remove the plaque through an incision in your neck. This helps restore blood flow to your brain and decreases your risk of stroke.



What can you expect before your procedure?

Be sure to communicate any medications or supplements you may take with your doctor. Some of these medications may need to be stopped prior to your procedure. Eight hours before your procedure, stop eating and drinking. You should not use any nicotine products for 4-6 weeks before your procedure.

What happens during your procedure?

An IV will be inserted and you will be given medication to relax by your anesthesia team, who will also insert a breathing tube. Your team will also administer an antibiotic to decrease your risk of infection. During your procedure, your neurological status will be monitored by placing electrode patches on your scalp. Your surgeon will then make an incision in your neck to expose the carotid artery and the blockage will be removed. You may have a graft placed over a section of your carotid artery. The carotid artery and your incision will be closed with sutures.

What happens after your procedure?

Your vital signs and neurological status will be monitored closely for the first 24 hours after surgery. You will spend 4 hours in the post-operative care unit (PACU). You can expect to spend at least one night in the hospital for monitoring; you may require intensive care monitoring in the ICU if there is difficulty controlling your vital signs. There will be a drain to help remove any excess fluid at the site of your incision. You might expect to experience some pain or discomfort in your neck for up to 2 weeks. You are not to drive or operate heavy machinery for 24 hours.

How to care for yourself after discharge:

Do not stop taking your Aspirin, Statin medication, or other blood thinners until directed to do so by your provider. Do not lift anything over 10 pounds until cleared by your doctor. If you develop any redness, swelling, drainage, or fever contact your doctor right away. If you develop any signs or symptoms of stroke such as dizziness, sudden loss of vision, facial weakness or numbness, arm or leg weakness or numbness, or difficulty speaking or understanding speech call 911 immediately. Do not use any tobacco products and continue to eat a heart-healthy diet. Your doctor will schedule you for a follow-up appointment 1 month after surgery and you can expect to have a carotid ultrasound performed at this time.