

WHAT IS CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE?

The carotid arteries are major blood vessels that transport oxygen-rich blood from the heart to the brain. They play a vital role because they supply circulation to vital areas of the brain. There are two carotid arteries—one on each side of the neck.






Carotid artery disease occurs when fatty deposits and calcium, known as plaque, build up in the carotid arteries. **If this build up becomes severe, it can lead to a blockage, which can cause a stroke or a ministroke** (a transient ischemic attack or TIA).

SYMPTOMS OF TIA - FAST

- F** - Face drooping & blurred/loss vision
- A** - Arm weakness/numbness
- S** - Speech problems
- T** - Time to call 911, as this is a medical emergency



What Causes Plaque Build Up?

-  High blood pressure
-  Smoking
-  High cholesterol
-  Diabetes
-  Genetic family history

RISK FACTORS

- + Before age 75, men have a higher risk
- + After age 75, women have a higher risk
- + High blood pressure + Smoking + Diabetes
- + High cholesterol + Heart disease or PAD

CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE

Diagnosis

At Oracle Heart & Vascular, our providers may perform the following test to confirm your diagnosis with carotid artery disease:

Screening: Initial symptoms are identified through a screening tool that includes several key questions

Carotid artery ultrasound: Used to examine the arteries in the neck through ultrasound

CT Scan: A CT scan, performed using either a magnetic resonance angiogram (MRA) or X-ray with contrast dye, can detect blockages and provides detailed anatomical information

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Our providers will discuss the best treatment option for you. Often, if narrowing is less than 80%, we will monitor with a yearly ultrasound. If greater than 80%, we may recommend intervention. **Recommendations often include:**

- + Lifestyle changes, including more exercise, a better diet, no smoking etc.
- + Certain medications, like antiplatelet medications
- + Angioplasty with stenting, or surgery to open up the carotid artery

PREVENTION TIPS



Increase exercise



Discuss risk factors with your Oracle provider



Eat a balanced diet



Take any prescribed medication