



What Is Carotid Endarterectomy?

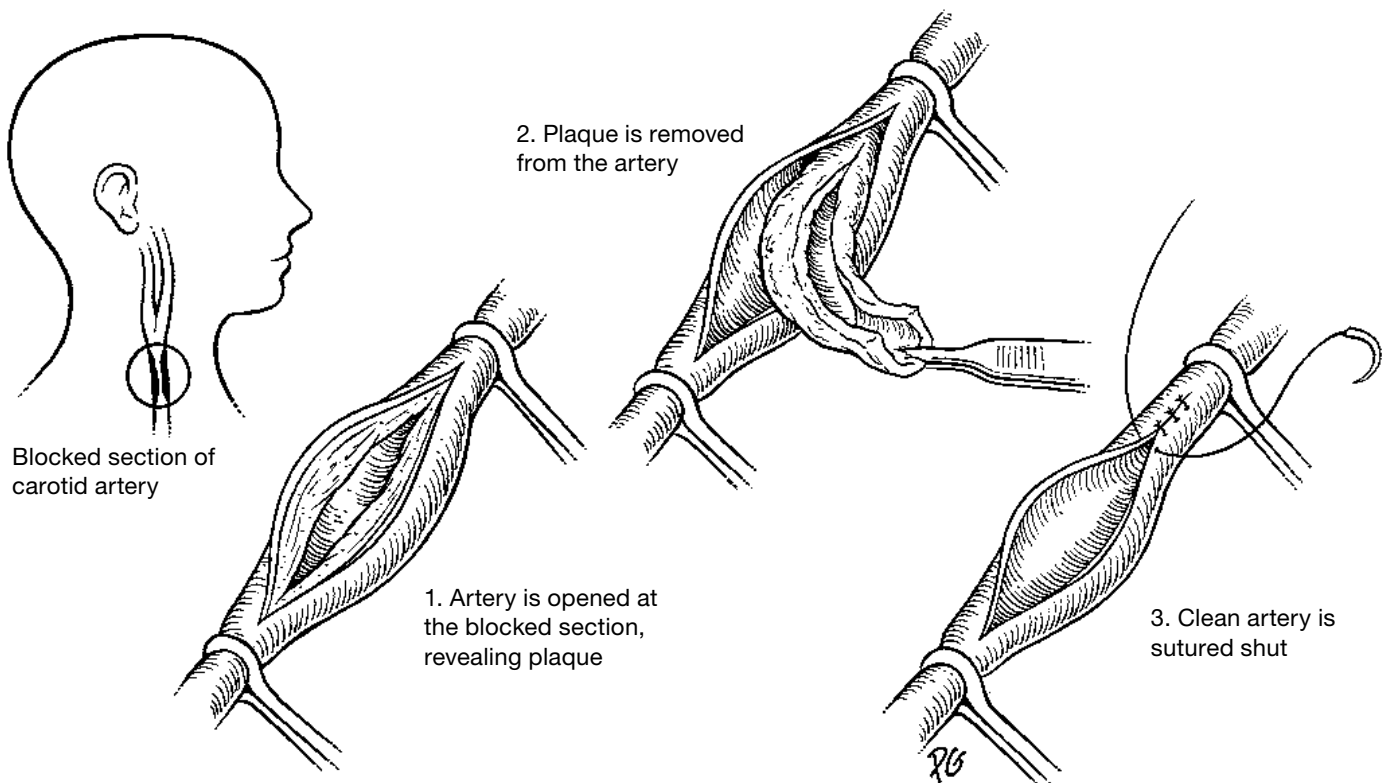
Why do I need it?

Carotid endarterectomy (ka-ROT-id en-dar-ter-EKT-o-mee) is surgery that removes harmful plaque (plak) from your carotid arteries. These two arteries supply your brain with blood and oxygen. If plaque and other fatty materials block an artery, it stops the blood flow and you could have a stroke.

Your doctor has given you one or more tests that show there is blockage. You may have had TIA, or transient ischemic (TRAN-zee-ent is-KEM-ik) attacks. These are mini strokes that can serve as warning signs of a major stroke. This operation can stop TIAs from happening and can reduce your risk for stroke.

How is it done?

- You'll be put to sleep before the surgery.
- A doctor will make a cut in your neck and open the carotid artery.
- Plaque will be taken out.
- The doctor will make the artery as smooth and clean as possible.
- The artery and the cut will be closed up.



What about afterwards?

- You'll wake up in the hospital and may feel confused at first.
- Your neck will hurt for a couple of days, and it may be hard to swallow at first.
- You'll probably go home in a day or two.
- You shouldn't lift anything heavy for about three weeks.
- You'll probably be able to return to work within a month.
- You should make healthy lifestyle changes to help reduce the chance of new plaque deposits and to lower your risk of stroke.

How can I reduce my risk of stroke?

- Have your blood pressure checked often and control high blood pressure.
- Don't smoke, and avoid other people's tobacco smoke.
- Take off any extra weight.
- Get regular physical activity.
- Have your blood sugar tested, and control diabetes if you have it.
- Eat less salt, saturated fat and trans fat.
- Limit alcohol to no more than two drinks a day for men, one drink a day for women.

How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit americanheart.org to learn more about heart disease.
3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit StrokeAssociation.org.

We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.

Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

Could I have a stroke during surgery?

Will I need surgery again?