

## What is it?

Carotid Stenosis occurs when fatty deposits, or plaques, build up in the carotid arteries due to atherosclerosis.

Atherosclerosis occurs when plaques that are made up of cholesterol, calcium, fibrous tissue and other bits of cellular debris attach to different parts of the artery. This creates a narrowing of the artery through which blood flows up to the brain.

The first sign that you have this condition, may be a stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA or mini stroke).



### Stroke Prevention Clinic

Saskatoon:

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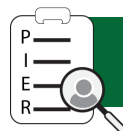
P:306-766-3959 | F: 306-766-3968



#### For More Information

[www.heartandstroke.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.ca)

Cleveland Clinic. (2022, March 16). *Carotid Artery Disease (Carotid Artery Stenosis)*. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/16845-carotid-artery-disease-carotid-artery-stenosis>



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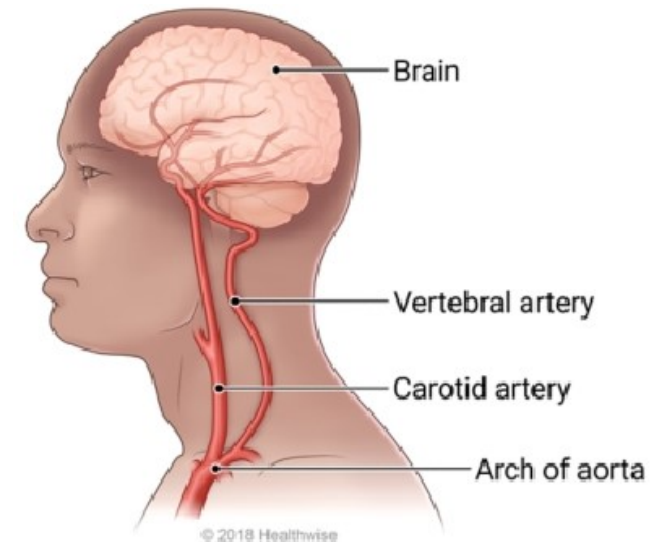
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Healthy People, Healthy Saskatchewan



# Carotid Stenosis

## Stroke Prevention Clinic



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CS-PIER-0106

April 2024

## Symptoms

In the early stage of carotid stenosis, there often are not any symptoms.

As the plaque builds up and the blood flow is diminished, symptoms can include those of a stroke or TIA.

Symptoms may include sudden onset:

- Numbness/weakness on one side
- Difficulty with speech
- Changes in vision in one eye
- Dizziness/loss of balance

## Causes

Factors that increase your risk of carotid stenosis include:

- high blood pressure
- smoking
- diabetes
- hyperlipidemia: high triglycerides, and LDL (bad cholesterol)
- obesity
- sleep apnea
- lack of exercise
- age

*The Saskatchewan Health Authority works in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, acknowledging Saskatchewan as the traditional territory of First Nations and Métis People.*

## Diagnosis

Tests that may be done to help diagnose carotid stenosis include:

- **Carotid ultrasound:** A scan to visualize the degree of narrowing (stenosis) and how the blood flows in the artery.
- **CT/CTA:** A dye is injected into your vein to see the vessels and blood flow in the neck/brain.
- **MRI/MRA:** A type of scan to assess

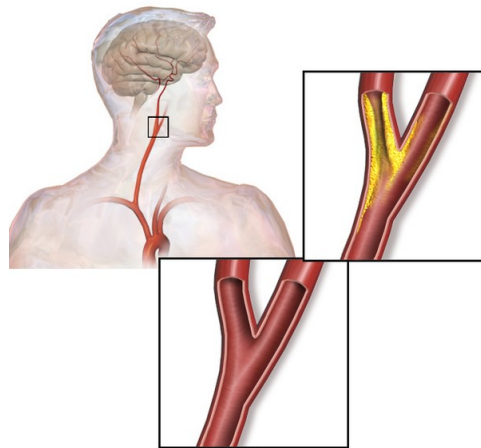


Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons—Blausen.com staff (2014). "[Medical gallery of Blausen Medical 2014](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carotid_artery_stenosis#/media/File:Carotid_artery_stenosis.png)". *WikiJournal of Medicine* 1 (2). Retrieved from: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carotid\\_artery\\_stenosis#/media/File:Carotid\\_artery\\_stenosis.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carotid_artery_stenosis#/media/File:Carotid_artery_stenosis.png) [cited 2024-APR-04]

**If at any time you are concerned about your symptoms, or they are unusual for you, please seek medical attention.**

## Treatment

Depending on the severity of the narrowing, your doctor may recommend:

- **Lifestyle changes:** quitting smoking, healthy diet, weight loss, exercise
- **Medication:** to help manage cholesterol and blood pressure. A blood thinner such as aspirin or Plavix® may also be prescribed.

If the carotid stenosis is severe and you have recently had symptoms, then you may be a candidate for surgical interventions, such as a carotid endarterectomy or a carotid stent. These procedures are done by a neurosurgeon and allows the vessel to open up to restore blood flow to the brain.

## Prevention

Fortunately modifying lifestyle can prevent or slow progression of carotid stenosis. These modifications can include:

- stop smoking, if you smoke
- maintain healthy weight
- exercise
- dietary changes: eating a variety of healthy foods including fruits and vegetables. Limiting salt and high fat foods
- taking your medications as prescribed