

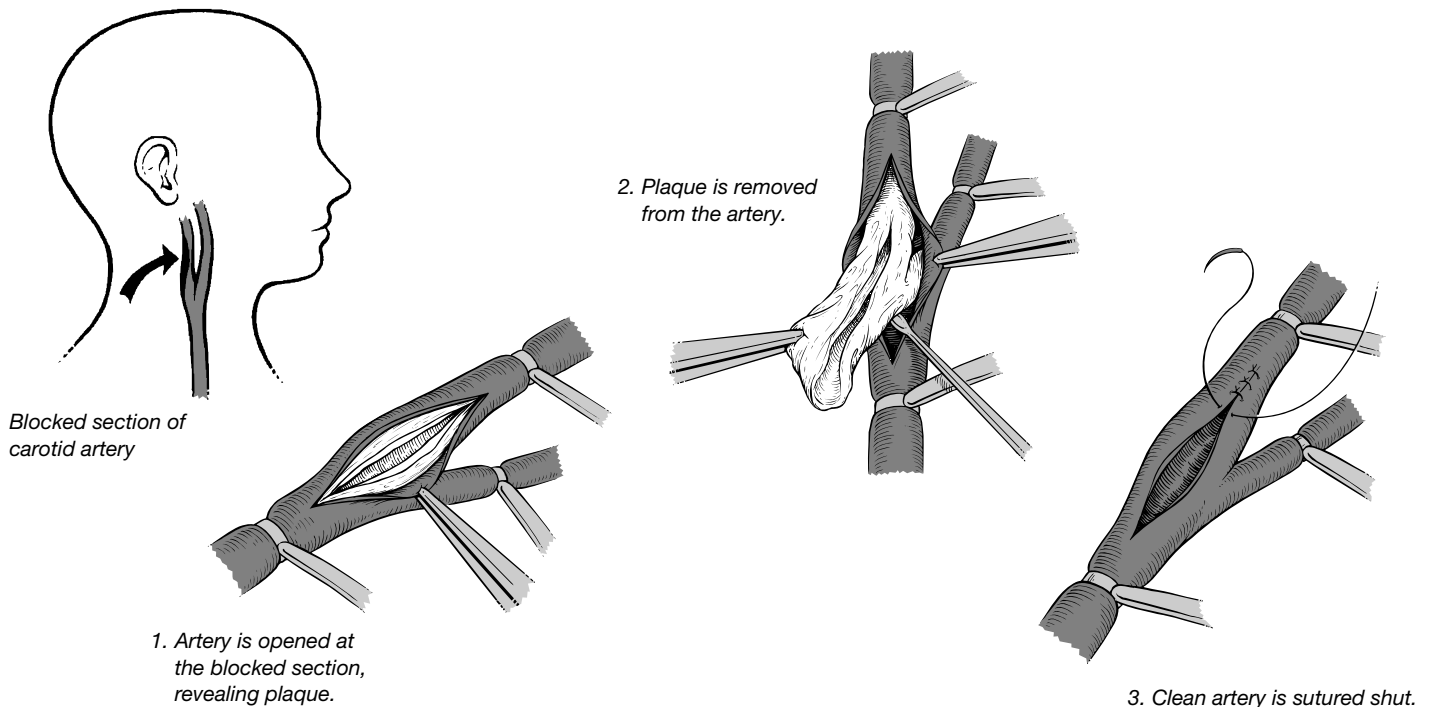
Let's Talk About Carotid Endarterectomy

Why do I need carotid endarterectomy?

The major blood supply to the brain travels through a pair of arteries (carotid arteries) on each side of the neck. Sometimes cholesterol plaques form in these arteries. This reduces the blood supply to the brain and increases the risk that a clot can block blood flow. When this

happens, people experience symptoms of stroke.

Carotid endarterectomy is a surgery that opens up the blocked artery, removes the plaque and restores blood flow.



What happens when I have this surgery?

- You will be put to sleep before the surgery, or a local anesthesia may be used.
- A surgeon will make a cut in your neck and open the carotid artery.
- The surgeon will take plaque out of your carotid artery.
- The surgeon will make the artery as smooth and clean as possible.
- The surgeon will close up the artery and the cut.

What happens after surgery?

- You will wake up in the hospital.
- Your neck may hurt for a couple of days, and it may be hard to swallow at first.
- For several months, you may have a loss of sensation in the area where you had your surgery. This is a normal reaction to the surgery. In time, feeling will return.
- You'll probably go home in a day or two.
- For about three weeks, you should not lift anything heavy.
- For a short time, you may be restricted from driving.
- Within a month you may be able to return to work.
- Your doctor may recommend medication after the procedure.
- You should make healthy lifestyle changes to help reduce the chance of plaque returning and to lower your risk of stroke.

How can I learn more?

- Talk to your doctor, nurse or other healthcare professionals. Ask about other stroke topics. This is one of many *Let's Talk About Stroke* fact sheets.
- For more information about stroke, or to get more fact sheets, call the American Stroke Association at 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at StrokeAssociation.org.
- If you or someone you know has had a stroke, call the American Stroke Association's "Warmline" at 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) and:
 - ✓ Speak with other stroke survivors and caregivers trained to answer your questions and offer support.
 - ✓ Get information on stroke support groups in your area.
 - ✓ Sign up to get *Stroke Connection*, a free magazine for stroke survivors and caregivers.

Do you have questions for your doctor or nurse?

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

Could I have a stroke during surgery?

Is the surgeon experienced in doing this procedure?

What are the risks of having this surgery?

Is there another kind of treatment for this problem?

What are the risks of not having this surgery?

Will I need a surgery again?

