



## More walks... and long talks.

Our cardiac and vascular clinic offers comprehensive, experienced and patient-centered care so you can get back to what matters most: Living your life.

### **WHAT IS CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE?**

Carotid Artery Disease is a buildup of plaque in the carotid arteries in the neck that can restrict blood flow to the brain and increase the risk of having a stroke. Fragments of plaque and tiny blood clots can

travel to smaller arteries in the brain, blocking them. This then cuts off the blood flow to a portion of the brain, resulting in a stroke.

### **WHO IS AT RISK FOR CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE?**

There are certain health conditions and habits that can increase your chances of developing Carotid Artery Disease. The most common ones include:

- Being age 50 or older
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Heart disease
- Chronic kidney disease

Carotid Artery Disease accounts for 10 to 12% of all ischemic strokes

### **WHAT ARE SYMPTOMS OF CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE?**

Most patients have no symptoms, but there are stroke warning signs to look out for. Stroke warning signs include:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arms or legs, especially one-sided
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or trouble understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance
- Sudden severe headache

### **WHAT ARE SOME COMPLICATIONS OF CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE?**

If left untreated, carotid arteries can become blocked and cause a stroke.

### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TESTS FOR CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE?**

- Carotid duplex/ultrasound - This test uses sound waves to make a picture of your carotid arteries and will show if you have any plaque buildup or blockages.
- Magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) - This test uses a magnet to create pictures of your neck arteries. This is performed at the hospital.
- Computed tomography angiography (CTA) - Also known as a CT scan, this test uses X-rays to create pictures of your neck arteries. This is performed at the hospital.
- Carotid angiogram - X-ray dye is injected into the artery using a thin, flexible tube (catheter). This allows blood vessels to be seen easily.

### **HOW IS CAROTID ARTERY DISEASE TREATED?**

What **you** can do:

Lifestyle modification can help reduce the risk of Carotid Artery Disease, these include:

- **Quit smoking**
- **Exercise daily** - This improves circulation, can lower your blood pressure and may help manage diabetes, weight and cholesterol levels
- Eat a **diet** low in fat and cholesterol and high in fruits and vegetables
- **Comply with your medications** - Take your medications as prescribed to control your blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol

What **we** can do:

- **Medications** - There are some medications that can help prevent blood clots and/or calcium buildup that might be an option for you. Our providers will explain more about these medications if they think they are right for your treatment.
- **Procedures** - This option is often advised to treat carotid artery disease and help restore blood flow to your brain. The first step is to obtain pictures of your carotid arteries. At CVCNM, we can perform this procedure in our outpatient offices, and you can go home the same day after your procedure. If stenting or surgery is required to restore blood flow to your brain, this would be performed at the hospital.



### **CARDIAC & VASCULAR CONSULTANTS OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN**

3865 W. Front Street, Units 4 & 5  
Traverse City, MI 49684

(o) 231.252.0414 (f) 231.252.0416

**We also schedule office visits  
in Alpena and Cadillac.**