

Controlling your risk: Hardening of the arteries

Hardening or atherosclerosis is caused by a buildup of calcium, cholesterol, and dead cells on the walls of your arteries. This buildup is called plaque. The process of growing plaque may start as early as age 5. Plaques become more dangerous as you age and if you have...

- diabetes
- a family history of early heart disease
- high cholesterol
- habits such as smoking tobacco or drinking too much alcohol.

Plaques are dangerous because they may crack open (rupture) and allow a blood clot to form. This clot can block the artery (thrombus) or it can break away and travel (embolus) to other parts of you. The thrombus or embolus may cause temporary or permanent problems.



Temporary problems are caused by narrowing

- angina
- a “mini-stroke - TIA
- leg pain while walking (intermittent claudication).

Permanent injuries are blockages

- heart attack - MI
- stroke - CVA
- amputation of a limb - PAD

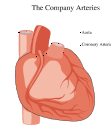
There are many different forms of this disease caused by “plaque” and plaque rupture. Following is a list of words that suggest a “diagnosis” of atherosclerosis.

Brain conditions including...



- Cerebrovascular accident - CVA, brain attack, stroke
- Cerebral embolism (clot goes to a brain artery)
- Cerebral thrombosis (clot forms in a brain artery)
- Transient ischemic attack - TIA, mini-stroke

Heart conditions including...



- Coronary artery disease - CAD
- Coronary heart disease - CHD
- Acute coronary syndrome - ACS, Unstable angina
- Acute myocardial infarction - AMI, Heart attack, MI
- Stable angina- angina, Variant Prinzmetal’s angina

Abdominal, Kidney or Leg conditions such as...

- Abdominal aortic aneurysm - AAA
- Carotid artery disease
- Peripheral artery disease - PAD
- Peripheral vascular disease - PVD

