

External carotid artery dissection

Carotid artery dissection is a medical condition where there is a tear in one of the carotid arteries, which are the major blood vessels that supply blood to the head and neck. The external carotid artery is one of the two main branches of the common carotid artery, and it supplies blood to the face, scalp, and neck.

External carotid artery dissection is a specific type of carotid artery dissection that involves the tearing or separation of the layers of the wall of the external carotid artery. This can lead to a variety of symptoms and complications, including:

Pain: Dissection can cause pain in the face, neck, or head.

Neurological Symptoms: Depending on the extent of the dissection, there may be neurological symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, or even stroke-like symptoms.

Swelling: Swelling or a lump may be present if there is bleeding into the surrounding tissues.

Bruising: Visible bruising on the neck or face may occur.

Impaired Blood Flow: Dissection can disrupt blood flow through the artery, potentially leading to complications such as reduced blood supply to the brain or other structures.

Causes of carotid artery dissection can include trauma, such as a car accident or blunt injury to the neck, but it can also occur spontaneously without an apparent cause. Diagnosis is typically confirmed through imaging studies such as magnetic resonance angiography (MRA) or computed tomography angiography (CTA).

Treatment for external carotid artery dissection may involve anticoagulant or antiplatelet medications to prevent blood clot formation and sometimes surgical intervention in severe cases. Management will depend on the extent of the dissection, the severity of symptoms, and the patient's overall health. If you suspect any issues related to your carotid arteries, it's important to seek prompt medical attention for evaluation and appropriate management.

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