

Posterior circulation

The posterior cerebral circulation (or simply, posterior circulation) is the blood supply to the posterior portion, including the [occipital lobes](#), [cerebellum](#) and [brainstem](#).

The posterior [circulation](#) consists of the 2 [vertebral artery](#), [basilar artery](#), 2 [posterior cerebral artery](#), and their branches ¹⁾ From these main vessels, many smaller vessels supply the posterior structures of the brain, including:

[Posterior inferior cerebellar artery](#)

[Anterior inferior cerebellar artery](#)

[Superior cerebellar artery](#)

This is the only vascular region in the body where 2 arteries unite to form a large arterial trunk that again divides in 2 major branches.

Anatomic variants

[Fetal circulation](#): 15–35% of patients supply their [posterior cerebral artery](#) on one or both sides primarily from the carotid (via p-comm) instead of via the [vertebrobasilar system](#).

Data indicate that congenital cerebrovascular variants in the [posterior circulation](#) and the associated cerebral [hypoperfusion](#) may be a factor in triggering [arterial hypertension](#). Therefore, lowering blood pressure may worsen cerebral perfusion in susceptible individuals ²⁾.

Posterior circulation stroke

see [Posterior circulation stroke](#).

Posterior circulation aneurysm

see [Posterior circulation aneurysm](#).

¹⁾

Easton DJ, Fauci AS, Isselbacher KJ. [Cerebrovascular disease](#). In: Anonymous Harrison's Principle of Internal Medicine. Fauci AS, Longo D, Kasper DL, Wilson JD, Martin JB, eds. New York, NY: McGraw Hill; 1998:2325–2348

²⁾

Warnert EA, Rodrigues JC, Burchell AE, Neumann S, Ratcliffe LE, Manghat NE, Harris AD, Adams Z, Nightingale AK, Wise RG, Paton JF, Hart EC. Is High Blood Pressure Self-Protection for the Brain? Circ Res. 2016 Dec 9;119(12):e140-e151. Epub 2016 Sep 26. PubMed PMID: 27672161.

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