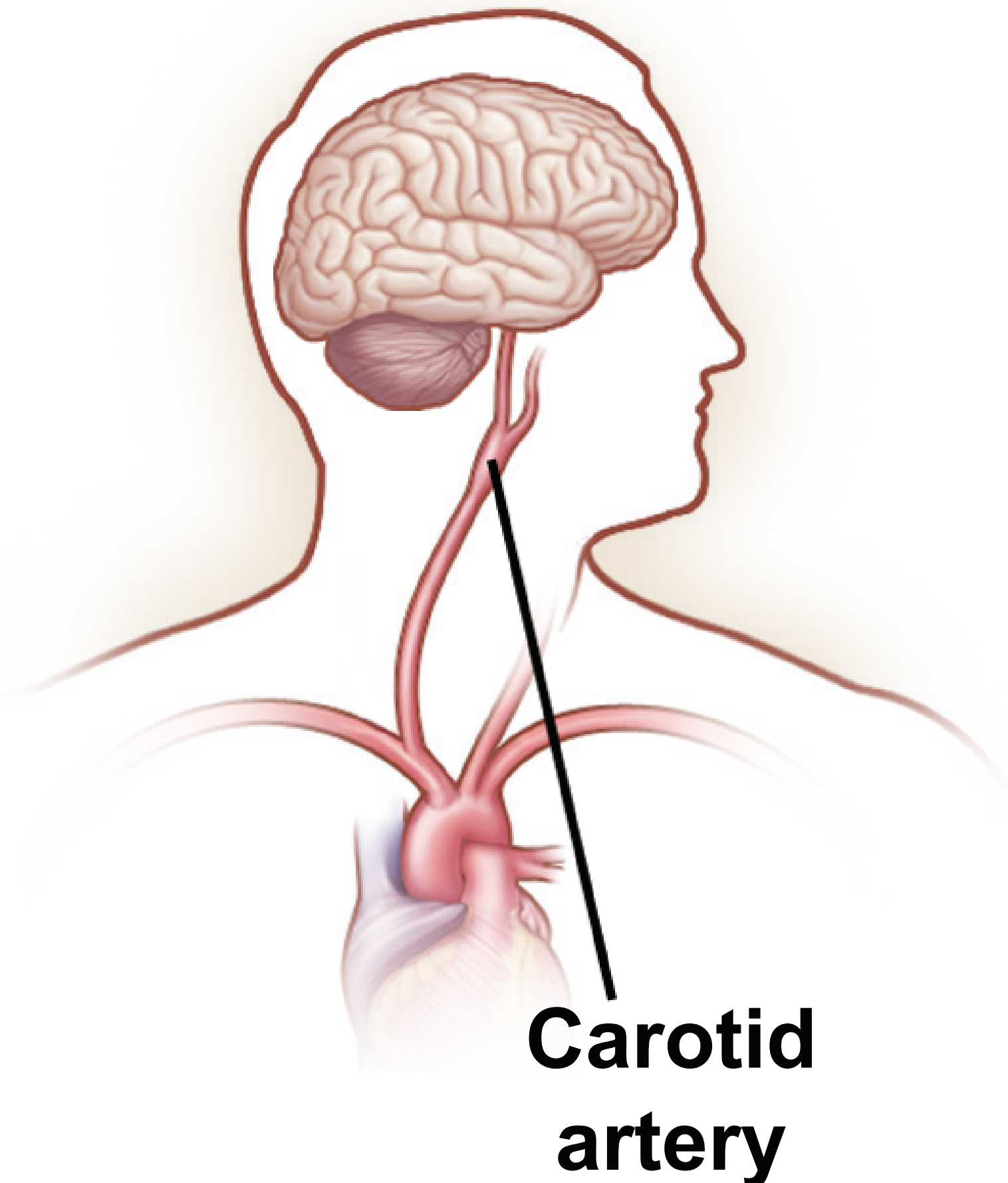


Maintain a Healthy Vascular System

Cigarette smoking, diet, and the lack of physical activity can contribute to cardiovascular disease. Eighty-one million Americans have cardiovascular disease. To reverse this trend, Americans may consider a few lifestyle changes.



Cigarette smoking

- Nicotine stimulates the heart rate, raises blood pressure, constricts arteries, and causes the body to release fat and cholesterol into the blood.
- Smoking accelerates hardening / narrowing of the arteries (atherosclerosis). This reduces blood flow which can lead to a stroke or heart attack. Smokers have 20 times the risk of coronary artery spasm than nonsmokers.
- Smoking increases the likelihood of: blood clots (coronary thrombosis) in the arteries leading away from the heart; narrowing of the arteries that carry blood to the leg and arm muscles, peripheral vascular disease (PAD); and of developing aneurysms that rupture.



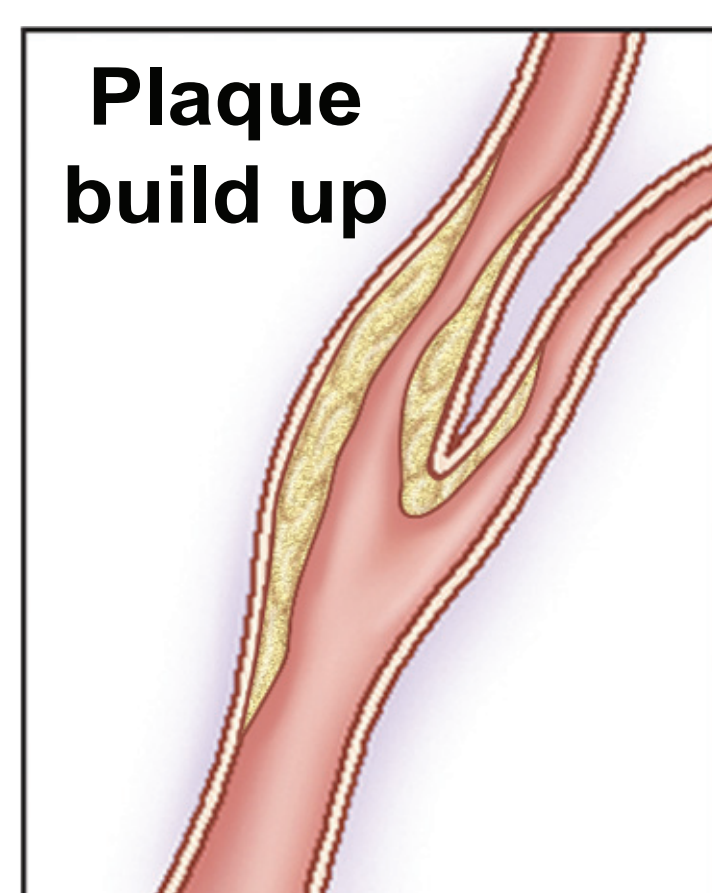
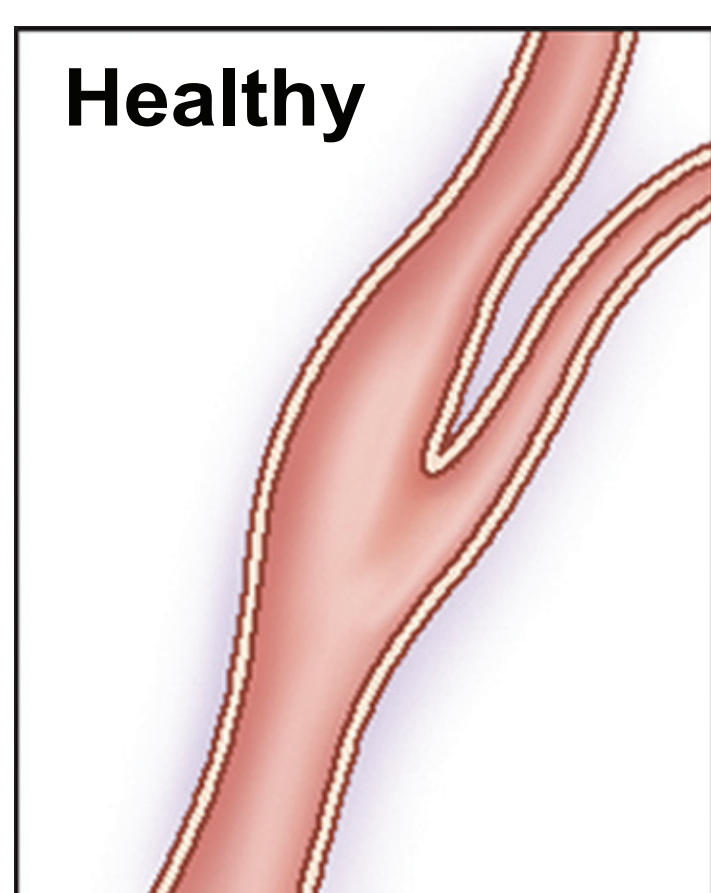
Physical Activity

- Exercise burns calories, increases the heart rate, and keeps the blood flowing at a healthy rate. Least physically fit persons have a mortality risk 4.5 times higher than physically fit persons.
- Adults ages 18 to 64 should participate in at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobics and strength training each week. The activity should continue for at least 10 minutes at a time.
- Daily physical activity should: be enjoyable; involve an exercise partner; and include a method of measuring progress such as a daily exercise journal.



Diet

- Dietary cholesterol is present in foods of animal origin e.g., liver, egg yolks, shrimp, and whole milk dairy products including butter, cream, and cheese. This contributes to the formation of plaque inside blood vessels.
- A narrowed blood vessel in the neck (carotid artery) may lead to stroke, the fourth leading cause of death in America, (source: *National Vital Statistics Report*). In 2010, 137,000 Americans died from stroke.
- Excessive intake of sodium - present in many processed foods and beverages - contributes to high blood pressure. Seventy-four million Americans (34 percent) have high blood pressure.



Vascular surgeons can monitor these conditions. They will often recommend diet modifications, exercise, or prescription medications for vascular conditions. If necessary, vascular surgeons can place stents and perform angioplasties, and bypass surgery.