# Carotid endarterectomy

**Surgery for clearing a narrowing or blockage in the carotid artery is a major procedure. For most patients, the most suitable anaesthetic is a local anaesthetic, which involves numbing the side of the neck being operated on. This allows the doctors looking after you to monitor you in the best possible way.**

## What happens before the operation?

The reason for having a carotid endarterectomy is that you have suffered one or more “mini-strokes” (TIA) and the aim of surgery is to reduce the risk of having a major stroke. It is likely you will be on blood-thinning and blood pressure control tablets started by your medical team. The anaesthetist will come to see you the night before or the morning of the operation to answer any questions you have.

## Where will I have my operation?

Your surgery will be performed at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. This surgery is performed as soon as possible so you may be admitted to ward 6a on the day before, or on the day of surgery depending if there is time to have a pre-operative assessment appointment.

## What happens in the operating theatre?

When you are brought into the operating theatre area, you come into the anaesthetic room first. Here a blood pressure cuff, ECG (small sticky pads on the chest) and an oxygen monitor will be attached. The anaesthetist will put two drips in your arm that are on the same side that you will have your operation. They will then give some medication to help you relax (sedation). The sedation ensures most people don’t remember the local anaesthetic going into their neck. This is a series of injections, which are given in your neck around the operation site to numb it. The sedation usually wears off gradually once the local anaesthetic is in.

## Why do I have local anaesthetic?

During the surgery, the artery in your neck has a clamp placed on it which may reduce blood supply to your brain. The best way of assessing this effect is to have you awake and talking to us. If you develop any symptoms similar to the “mini-stroke” you had before, the doctors will need to change your treatment in theatre.

In the operating theatre there is a full team of staff attending to you. You will lie on the operating table covered with a blanket to keep you warm. The surgeon will clean your neck with antiseptic fluid, and then place a clear plastic drape over that part of your neck. This is the surgical field and helps to keep everything clean and to stop the wound from getting infected. You will not be

able to see the operating site and will have a nurse sitting at the head of the table and who will keep you company throughout the procedure.
The procedure takes 1-2 hours. You will be able to talk to people during the surgery, but there will be times when the surgeons will need you to be very still and not talking.

## After surgery

Once the operation is finished, you will go to an area called “Recovery”. You will stay there for at least 4 hours and you will be watched carefully. In particular, your blood pressure and neurological signs will be closely monitored. In Recovery, once the staff are satisfied that you are stable, you can have something to eat and drink.
After this, you will return to the surgical ward. Most patients spend 1-2 days in hospital and only require simple painkillers (such as paracetamol and codeine).

## Follow up

You will be sent an appointment to be seen in the Vascular Clinic in the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading 6 weeks after your surgery.
If you would like to read some more on the subject have a look at this website:
www.nhs.uk/conditions/carotidendarterectomy/Pages/introduction.aspx

## Useful phone numbers

**Royal Berkshire Hospital**

Vascular Clinical Nurse Specialists, Tiina Winson and Ioanna Valera, 0118 322 8627.

Surgery Clinical Admin Team (CAT3), Royal Berkshire Hospital 0118 322 6890.

**John Radcliffe Hospital**

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| Ward 6a: | 01865 221802 |
| Pre-operative assessment | 01865 857635 |
| Theatre direct admissions | 01865 221055 |

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**Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.**

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