

Cervical Artery Dissection (CAD)

Risk Factors & Symptoms

SYMPTOMS



HEADACHE OR NECK PAIN

Sudden, one-sided



HORNER'S SYNDROME

Droopy eyelid, small pupil



CRANIAL NERVE PALSY

Most commonly the hypoglossal nerve



TIA/STROKE-LIKE SYMPTOMS

Facial droop, slurred speech, dizziness



AUDITORY OR VISUAL CHANGES

Tinnitus, retinal ischemia, double vision

KEY RISK FACTORS

GENETIC

- **Migraine** → ~2x higher risk
- **MTHFR TT genotype** → ~3x higher risk
- **Connective tissue disorders (Marfan, Ehlers-Danlos, FMD)** → Possible risk

EXTERNAL

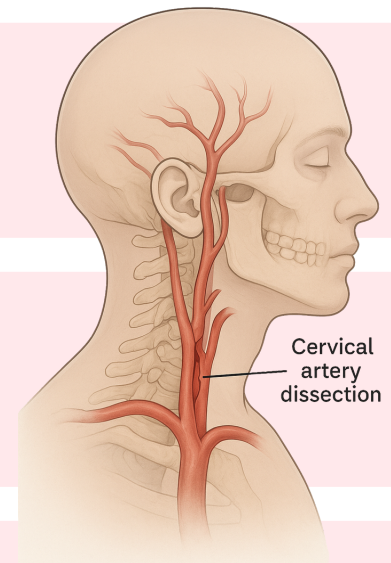
- **Recent infection (esp. respiratory)** → ~2x higher risk
- **Winter season (infection-related)** → Higher risk
- **Oral contraceptive use** → Possible association

MINOR TRAUMA

- **Heavy lifting, sports injuries, trivial trauma** → Increased risk
- **Cervical spinal manipulation** → No proven increased risk compared to PCP visits

CARDIOVASCULAR

- **Hypertension** → Consistent risk
- **Hypercholesterolemia, coronary artery disease, other cardiac disease** → Possible risk
- **Smoking & diabetes** → Not significant



CLINICAL TAKEAWAYS



Screen for risk factors and red-flag symptoms before neck treatment.



If CAD is suspected do not treat and refer immediately to emergency care.



Cervical manipulation isn't an independent risk, but informed consent and caution are essential.