

Carotid Vertebral Duplex Scan

The carotid arteries are found in the neck. They supply most of the blood to the brain. A carotid duplex scan uses sound waves to check how well the blood flows through the carotid arteries and to detect any blockage. The test takes about 60 minutes.

Before the test

There is no preparation for this test. You may eat and take your usual medications.

If you are already a patient at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, a patient escort will bring you to the Vascular Lab on the 8th floor of Feinberg Pavilion.

If you are an outpatient, plan to arrive 15 minutes before your test time. Be sure to bring:

- Your physician's written order for the test, if you have one
- A list of your allergies
- A list of all your current medications (prescription, over-the-counter and herbal)
- Photo ID
- Medical insurance information and card
- Medicare card (Medicare patients only)

*If you have
any questions,
please ask your
physician.*

For their own safety, children under 16 may not visit in the testing area. They may stay in the waiting room with a responsible adult.

Please come to Galter Pavilion, 201 East Huron Street, and check in at the reception desk on the 8th floor. Parking is available for patients and visitors in the garage at 222 East Huron Street, across from Feinberg and Galter pavilions.

For a discounted rate, bring your parking ticket with you. You can validate your ticket at the Customer Services Desks on the 1st and 2nd floor of Feinberg and Galter pavilions, and on the 1st floor of Prentice Women's Hospital.

During the test

A technologist (tech) will do the test in the Vascular Lab. The tech will help you lie on your back on an exam table. They will apply a warm, clear gel to your neck. Then the tech will move a small, handheld device (transducer) on the skin over the arteries they are examining.

The transducer will transmit sound waves to a monitor. The tech will see the images and save them for later review. The scanner will take pictures of the arteries at various sites. The tech will also listen to the blood flow through these arteries and record the sound. There is a carotid artery on each side of the neck, and the tech will test both sides. They will also check the vertebral arteries that run up the back of the neck.

After the test

The tech will give you towels to help remove the gel. You may resume your normal diet and activities.

Your physician will discuss the results of this test with you. Most often, the vascular surgeon who reads the test will send the written results to your physician in about 5 business days.

Please feel free to ask questions before, during or after the test.