

Atherosclerosis: Open Access

Atherosclerosis : A Brief

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Atherosclerosis is the narrowing of arteries due to plaque buildup on the artery walls. Arteries carry blood from the heart to the rest of the body. A thin layer of cells forms a lining that keeps them smooth and allows blood to flow easily. This is called the endothelium. Atherosclerosis happens when the endothelium becomes damaged, due to factors such as smoking, high blood pressure, or high levels of glucose, fat, and cholesterol in the blood. This damage allows a collection of substances, known as plaque, to build up in the artery wall. These substances include fat and cholesterol.

Over time, plaque can build up and become hard. If plaque continues to collect, it can block the artery and disrupt the flow of blood around the body. Sometimes, pieces of plaque break open. If this happens, particles from blood cells, known as platelets, gather in the affected area. These can stick together, forming blood clots. A clot can block the artery, leading to life threatening complications, such as stroke and heart attack. Atherosclerosis can affect any artery, but it mainly occurs in the larger, high pressure arteries.

Atherosclerosis has been derived from a Greek word, Athero
