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RENAL ARTERY STENOSIS

What is renal artery stenosis?

Renal artery stenosis refers to a narrowing or blockage of the renal artery. The renal artery supplies blood to the kidneys. Renal artery stenosis can lead to kidney failure and high blood pressure.

What causes renal artery stenosis?

Renal artery stenosis can be caused by atherosclerotic disease (renal arteries blocked with "plaque") or scar formation in the artery, as illustrated below.



A less common cause is fibromuscular disease, which is more likely to occur in young women. In this circumstance, fibrous tissue grows in the wall of the renal artery, causing narrowing.

Renal artery stenosis can cause high blood pressure. Renal artery stenosis accounts for 1 to 2% of all cases of hypertension.

What are the symptoms of renal artery stenosis?

There are usually no symptoms.

How is renal artery stenosis diagnosed?

Often, it is discovered by your doctor during the treatment of hypertension that is particularly difficult to control. Renal artery stenosis can cause a whooshing sound over the kidney, which your doctor might detect while listening to your abdomen with a stethoscope.

Certain diagnostic tests and/or imaging procedures can help detect renal artery stenosis. They include:

- radionuclide nephrogram
- kidney X-ray,
- kidney CT scan
- kidney ultrasound

renal arteriography

How is renal artery stenosis treated?

Treatment of renal artery stenosis depends on the cause of the disease and its severity. In some circumstances, no treatment beyond routine follow-up with your doctor is required.

Antihypertensive medications are used to treat high blood pressure.

If caused by atherosclerotic disease, your doctor will first ask you to address the risk factors for cardiovascular disease, including diet, exercise, and stopping smoking.

Your doctor may suggest balloon angioplasty of the diseased artery, or surgical repair.