

## CADASIL

### About the condition

CADASIL is the most common genetic cause of stroke and vascular dementia in adults.

The name CADASIL is short for:

Cerebral autosomal dominant arteriopathy with subcortical infarcts and leukoencephalopathy.

Each part of the name relates to the cause or effect of the condition. Cerebral refers to the brain; Autosomal Dominant refers to the way in which it is inherited.

CADASIL is an inherited disorder caused by changes (mutations) in a gene called Notch 3.

Strokes are the main feature of CADASIL and often occur repeatedly. Strokes may lead to severe disability, such as an inability to walk and urinary incontinence. The average age of a person when strokes first appear is 46 years.

### Changes that might happen

CADASIL usually causes a slow decline in thought processes and approximately 75% of affected people eventually develop dementia.

Strokes that occur can:

- affect a person's thinking, reasoning and planning abilities
- cause changes in mood
- affect how a person walks.

Other changes that may happen include:

- migraines with aura occur in about 35% of people with CADASIL
- 30% percent of people with CADASIL experience psychiatric issues, varying from personality changes to severe depression
- epilepsy is present in 10% of people with CADASIL and usually occurs in middle age.

### Things to consider and strategies to cope

You may find it helpful to tell people about the condition and how it affects you because it might not be obvious from your outward appearance. It is possible that CADASIL has caused 'invisible disabilities' that other people won't recognise straight away, so it can help to explain if you feel comfortable doing so.

You could carry a card that offers brief details about your condition- online printers offer customised business cards for a low cost. A small image, a brief outline of the disease and a list of symptoms can fit on one side. This could be kept in your purse or wallet, along with contact details for CADASIL Association ([www.curecadasil.org](http://www.curecadasil.org)) so anyone interested can find out more.

### Useful information

For more information, visit:

- [www.curecadasil.org](http://www.curecadasil.org)
- [www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/types-dementia/cadasil](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/types-dementia/cadasil)