

SMOHIT Body Maintenance
Toolbox Talks for the Sheet Metal Industry

What Causes Atherosclerosis?

- The exact cause of atherosclerosis isn't known.
 - However, studies show that atherosclerosis is a slow, complex disease that may start in childhood.
 - It develops faster as you age.

- Atherosclerosis may start when certain factors damage the inner layers of the arteries.
 - These factors include:
 - Smoking
 - High amounts of certain fats and cholesterol in the blood
 - High blood pressure
 - Elevated amounts of sugar in the blood due to insulin resistance or diabetes

- When damage occurs, your body starts a healing process.
 - The healing may cause plaque to build up where the arteries are damaged.
 - Eventually, a section of plaque can break open, causing a blood clot to form at the site.
 - A blood clot will narrow the artery even more and may worsen angina (chest pain) or cause a heart attack or stroke.

- Researchers continue to look for the causes of atherosclerosis and hope to find answers to questions such as:
 - Why and how do the arteries become damaged?
 - How does plaque develop and change over time?
 - Why does plaque and lead to blood clots?

Notes:

Instructor Tips

- **Explain that smoking, high blood pressure and certain dietary factors (i.e. cholesterol, fats and sugar) may contribute to damages in the inner layers of the arteries.**

- **Ask workers to share any health problems they may have had, or heard of, due to blood clots caused by plaque breaking open in an artery.**

- **Share any health problems you may have had, or heard of, due to blood clots caused by plaque breaking open in an artery.**

Jobsite: _____
Supervisor: _____

Date: _____
G.C. _____

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