

## **Rare Threat**

### **Rare threat of stroke at the beauty salon.**

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The position commonly used for shampooing at beauty salons, with the neck tipped far backward over the edge of a sink, can diminish the blood supply to the brain and may precipitate strokes in older people. An article in the Journal of the American Medical Association described five women between the ages of 54 and 84 who developed serious neurological symptoms requiring hospitalization after such shampoos. The authors suggest that beauty parlors consider shampooing elderly clients while they are leaning forward, a position less likely to compress arteries. Strokes have also been reported in patients after anesthesia. Anesthesiologists must often temporarily arch the neck far back to insert a breathing tube down the patient's airway. Once the tube is in place, the neck should be returned to a neutral position. These problems occur because the vertebral arteries that feed the back of the brain pass through canals in the bones of the upper spine. With aging, these crucial blood vessels become narrowed with debris and the normally smooth bones they run through develop jagged spurs. When the neck is moved into an extreme position, the bones shift in relation to one another and can compress or injure the already narrowed vessels.

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