

Biology

By [Regina Bailey](#), About.com Guide

Researchers from the University of Washington have uncovered more clues as to how [heart](#)¹ arteries may become blocked over time. By studying [blood vessel](#)² walls, it was discovered that cells move closer together when they are in areas where blood flow is swift. This clinging together of cells reduces the loss of fluid from the blood vessels. The researchers noted that in areas where blood flow is slow, there tends to be more leakage from [arteries](#)³. This leads to artery blocking cholesterol buildup in those areas.

According to lead author Nathan Sniadecki, "Our results indicate that these cells can sense the kind of flow that they're in, and they structurally change how they hold themselves together. This highlights the role that cellular forces play in the progression of cardiovascular disease." The researchers believe that the speed of blood flow sparks biochemical changes that allow cell membrane proteins to stick closer together. Gaining a better understanding of how artery cells respond to blood flow could potentially lead to the development of new drug treatments for cardiovascular disease.

Learn more about this study, see:

- [Cells in Blood Vessels Found to Cling More Tightly in Regions of Rapid Flow](#)⁴ (Science Daily)

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