

What Is Angina?

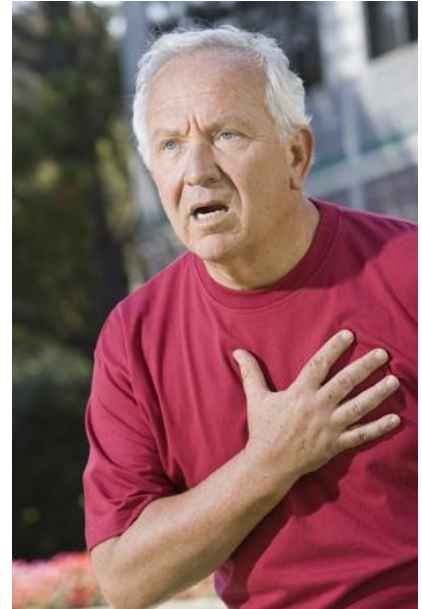
Angina is a warning that the heart muscle is not getting enough oxygen-rich blood. Medication, certain medical procedures, and lifestyle changes can help control angina. Talk to your doctor about how to prevent angina and what to do if you get it.

How Does Angina Feel?

Angina is often described as “chest pain,” but this can be misleading. Angina is not always painful, and it isn’t always felt in the chest. Angina might feel like this:

- Discomfort, aching, tightness, or pressure that comes and goes. You may feel this in your chest, back, abdomen, arm, shoulder, neck, or jaw.
- More fatigue than usual for no clear reason
- Shortness of breath while doing something that used to be easy
- Heartburn, indigestion, nausea, or sweating

If any of your symptoms lasts for more than a few minutes, or if they go away and come back, occur at rest, and don't go away with nitroglycerin, you could be having a heart attack, also known as acute myocardial infarction, or AMI. **Call 911 right away!**



When Does Angina Happen?

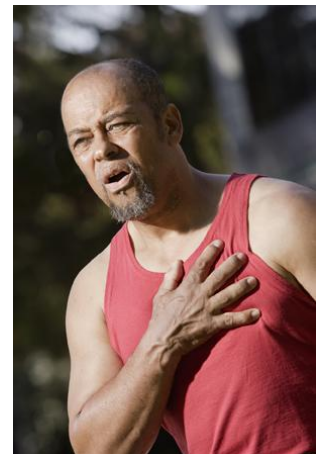
- Angina usually happens during activity. It can also occur when you’re upset or after a large meal.
- If angina starts occurring more frequently, lasts longer, or causes more discomfort, you may have **unstable angina**. It’s a sign that your heart problem may be getting worse.

Recognizing a Heart Attack or Angina

If you have risk factors for heart problems, you should always be on the lookout for signs of angina or a heart attack. If you have a sudden heart problem, getting treatment right away could save your life.

Understanding angina and heart attack

- Angina is a painful burning, tightness, or pressure in the chest, back, neck, throat, or jaw. It signals a lowered amount of blood flow to the heart, most commonly explained by a blockage in a heart artery. Angina is a sign that you may be having, or are about to have, a heart attack.



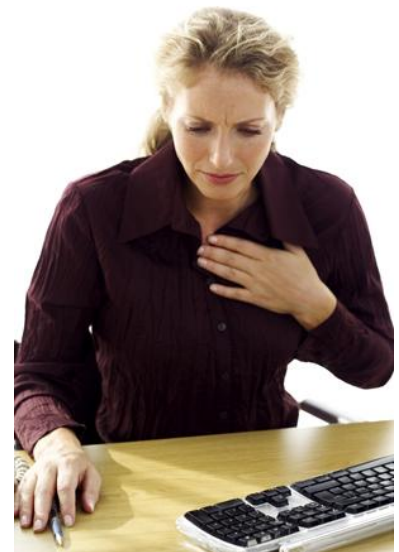
- A heart attack, also known as acute myocardial infarction, or AMI, is what happens when blood cannot get to part of the heart muscle. Part of the heart muscle then begins to die. A heart attack can be deadly. It is vital to get help as soon as possible for a heart attack.

Stable angina versus unstable angina

Stable angina, also known as chronic angina, has a typical pattern. It occurs predictably with physical exertion or strong emotion. Symptoms are easily relieved by rest and nitroglycerin or both. Angina symptoms will most likely feel the same time each time you have them. It is important to discuss these symptoms with your doctor as they can be a warning sign for a future heart attack.

Unstable angina causes unexpected or unpredictable symptoms, commonly occurring at rest, and is a medical emergency. Angina is also considered unstable if resting and nitroglycerin don't provide symptom relief or if symptoms are worsening, occurring more frequently and lasting longer. These symptoms suggest a severe blockage or a spasm of a heart artery. Unstable angina is commonly a sign of an active heart attack. Remember the following tips:

- Stable angina symptoms last for only a few minutes. If they last for longer than a few minutes, or go away and come back, you may be having a heart attack. Call 911!
- Stable angina symptoms should go away with rest or medication. If they don't go away, call 911!
- If you have shortness of breath, cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness, call 911!



For new-onset angina, there is only one response: call 911! You should never "diagnose" angina by yourself. If these symptoms are new, or worse than usual, call 911!

Warning signs of a heart attack

If you have symptoms that you can't explain, call 911 right away. The following are warning signs of a possible heart attack:

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.

Note for women: Like men, women commonly have chest pain or discomfort as a heart attack symptom. But women are somewhat more likely than men to have other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea and vomiting, back pain, or jaw pain.

If you have diabetes: silent heart problems

Over time, high blood sugar can damage nerves in your body. This may keep you from feeling pain caused by a heart problem, leading to a “silent” heart problem. If you don’t feel symptoms, you are less able to get treatment right away. Talk to your health care provider about how to lower your risk for silent heart problems.



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