

REVIEWED

By Chris at 1:38 pm, Aug 25, 2020

Angina Pectoris (Stable Angina)



You may have heard the term “angina pectoris” or “stable angina” in your doctor’s office, but what is it, and what could it mean for you? It’s important to understand the basics.

Angina pectoris is the medical term for chest pain or discomfort due to [coronary heart disease](#). It occurs when the heart muscle doesn't get as much blood as it needs. This usually happens because one or more of the heart's arteries is narrowed or blocked, also called [ischemia](#).

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Angina usually causes uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest. You may also feel the discomfort in your neck, jaw, shoulder, back or arm. (Many types of chest discomfort — like heartburn, lung infection or [inflammation](#) — aren't related to angina.) [Angina in women can be different than in men.](#)

[View an animation of angina.](#)

When does angina pectoris occur?

Angina often occurs when the heart muscle itself needs more blood than it is getting, for example, during times of physical activity or strong emotions. Severely narrowed arteries may allow enough blood to reach the heart when the demand for oxygen is low, such as when you're sitting. But, with physical exertion—like walking up a hill or climbing stairs—the heart works harder and needs more oxygen.

Symptoms of Stable Angina

The pain or discomfort:

- Occurs when the heart must work harder, usually during physical exertion
- Doesn't come as a surprise, and episodes of pain tend to be alike
- Usually lasts a short time (5 minutes or less)
- Is relieved by rest or medicine
- May feel like gas or indigestion
- May feel like chest pain that spreads to the arms, back, or other areas



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Possible triggers of stable angina include:

- Emotional stress – learn [stress management](#)
- Exposure to very hot or cold temperatures – learn how [cold](#) and [hot weather](#) affect the heart.
- Heavy meals
- Smoking – learn more about [quitting smoking](#).

[Track your angina symptoms with our Angina Log.](#)

Treatment of Angina Pectoris

People with angina pectoris or sometimes referred to as stable angina have episodes of chest pain. The discomfort that are usually predictable and manageable. You might experience it while running or if you're dealing with stress.

Normally this type of chest discomfort is relieved with rest, nitroglycerin or both. Nitroglycerin relaxes the coronary arteries and other blood vessels, reducing the amount of blood that returns to the heart and easing the heart's workload. By relaxing the coronary arteries, it increases the heart's blood supply.

If you experience chest discomfort, be sure and visit your doctor for a complete evaluation and, possibly, tests. If you have stable angina and start getting chest pain more easily and more often, see your doctor immediately as you may be experiencing early signs of [unstable angina](#).

Learn more:

- [What is angina?](#)
- [Unstable Angina](#)
- [Prinzmetal's Angina, Variant Angina and Angina Inversa](#)
- [Microvascular Angina](#)

- [Angina in Women](#)
- [What is Broken Heart Syndrome?](#)

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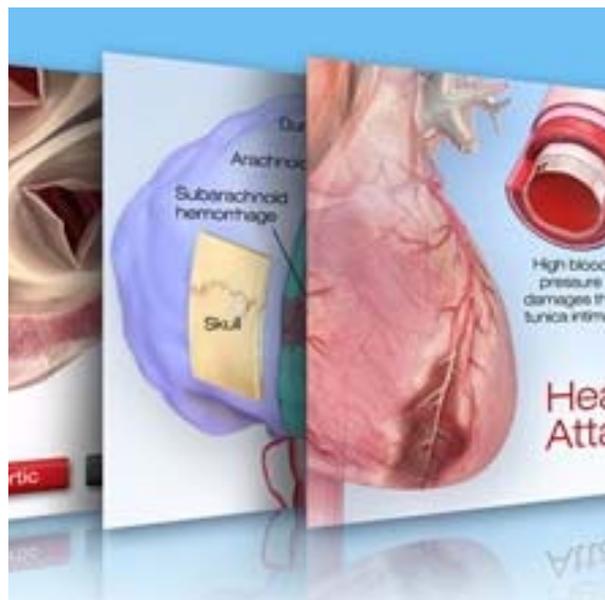
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