



## Angina

Angina is chest pain or discomfort. It occurs when the heart muscle does not get as much blood and oxygen as it needs for a given level of work.

### Signs & Symptoms

- Squeezing pressure, heaviness, or mild ache in the chest (usually behind the breastbone)
- Aching in a tooth with or without squeezing pressure in the chest
- Aching into the neck muscles, jaw, one or both arms, or back
- A feeling of gas in the upper abdomen and lower chest
- A feeling that you're choking or shortness of breath



Areas of pain felt with angina.

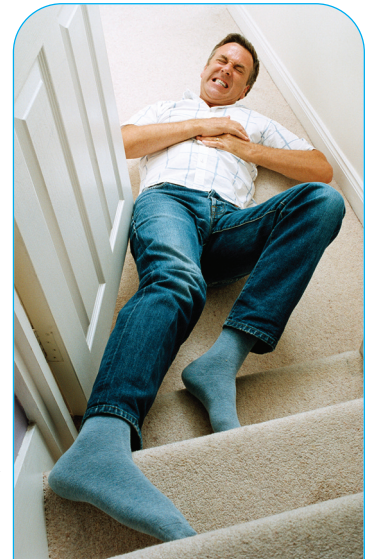
- Paleness and sweating
- Nausea and vomiting

Many people who experience angina for the first time fear they're having a heart attack. A heart attack damages or injures the heart muscle. Angina does not. Pain from angina is a warning sign that heart attack can occur, though.

### Causes, Risk Factors & Care

Angina is caused by blocked or narrowed blood vessels that supply blood to the heart.

Episodes of angina are often brought on by anger, excitement, or emotional shock. Exertion or heavy physical work, hurrying up the stairs, or walking rapidly uphill can also bring on an angina episode.



Pain from angina may be felt with exertion.



### Angina, Continued

If you have angina, your doctor or a cardiologist should follow you closely. He or she may prescribe:

- Medications, such as nitroglycerin, beta-blockers, and a low-dose daily aspirin
- Daily physical exercise specific for you
- Surgery, such as angioplasty or bypass surgery



Do the exercises your doctor recommends.



### Self-Care:

Medical care is needed to treat angina. If you have angina, these self-care measures can be part of your treatment plan.

- Don't smoke. If you smoke, quit.
- Follow a low-saturated fat, low cholesterol diet.
- Eat 5 to 6 small meals instead of 3 large meals a day.
- Maintain a healthy weight. If you are overweight, lose weight.
- After you eat, rest or do a quiet activity.

- Minimize exposure to cold, windy weather.
- Take medication(s), as prescribed.
- Avoid sudden physical exertion, such as running to catch a bus.
- Avoid anger whenever you can.
- Manage stress.



### Contact Doctor When:

- You have been diagnosed with angina and there is a change in your angina symptoms. You may, for example, start to feel symptoms at rest.
- You have minor chest pain that is not due to an injury or strain, does not let up, and/or is not relieved by rest.



### Get Immediate Care When:

- You have symptoms of a heart attack. (See "Heart Attack Warning Signs" at [www.HealthyLearn.com](http://www.HealthyLearn.com).)
- You have been diagnosed with angina and your chest pain does not respond to your prescribed medicine or the pain does not go away in 10 to 15 minutes.