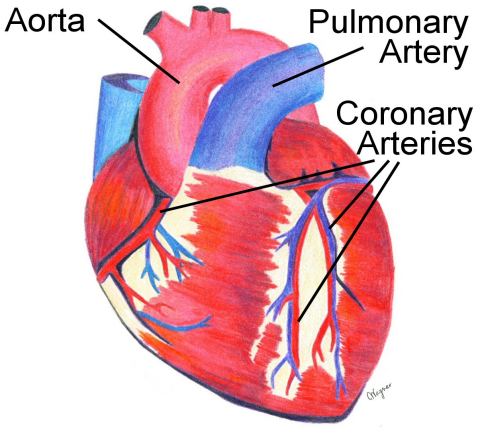
Angina

Angina is chest discomfort caused by lack of oxygen to the heart muscle. It is a warning sign that there is a blood flow problem to your heart. Angina is referred to as either stable or unstable. Stable angina often happens with the same kind of activity, lasts a few minutes, and feels the same each time. Unstable angina has no pattern, no warning, lasts longer, and is more serious. Unstable angina might predict a heart attack.



HEART

CAUSES

The heart needs oxygen to pump blood to the body. The coronary arteries supply oxygen and blood to the heart muscle. These arteries can get blocked with plaques, such as fat and cholesterol. Things that can put plaque in your arteries include:

- Having high cholesterol.
- Having high blood pressure.
- Smoking.
- Being overweight.
- Having diabetes.

HOME CARE

- Understand how to take your medicine and what side effects to expect.
  - **Do not** stop the medicines.
  - **Do not** change how much you take (*dosage*) on your own.
- Men who have ED (*erectile dysfunction*) need to be careful when taking drugs for chest pain. These drugs may contain nitrates.
- Mild exercise may help. Start exercising only if your doctor says it is okay.
- Stop smoking. Stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Lose weight if you are overweight. Eat a heart-healthy diet that is low in fat and salt.

GET HELP IF:

- Your angina seems to happen more often or lasts longer.
- You are having side effects to your medicine. Read your medicine instructions carefully.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- Your chest pain spreads to the arms, back, neck, or jaw.
- You have an attack that does not get better after rest or taking medicine.
- You have sweating, feel sick to your stomach (*nauseous*), or have a hard time breathing.
- You feel faint or weak.
- You have chest pain unlike your usual angina. This is especially true if the pain is crushing or pressure-like. **THIS IS AN EMERGENCY. Do not** wait to see if the pain will go away. **Get medical help right away. Call your local medical emergency services (911 in the U.S.). Do not** drive yourself to the hospital.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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