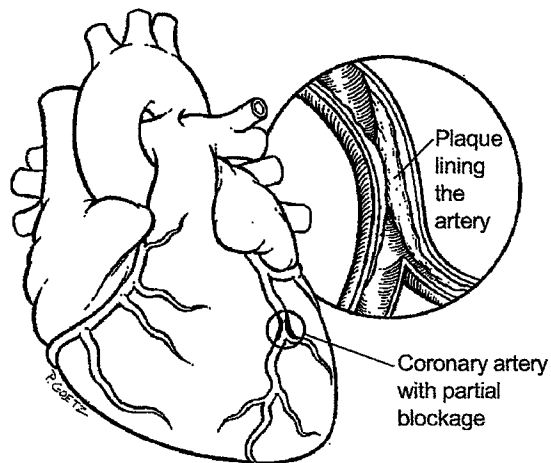


# What is Angina?

Angina is the chest pain or discomfort that occurs when your heart doesn't get as much blood and oxygen as it needs. Over time, the coronary arteries that supply blood to your heart can become clogged from a buildup of fats, cholesterol and other substances. This buildup is called plaque.

If one or more arteries are partly clogged, not enough blood can flow through, and you can feel chest pain or discomfort.

Angina is common. More than 6 million people in the United States have it. And while angina may not cause long-term heart damage, it's a sign of heart disease.



When a clogged artery keeps the heart from getting enough blood and oxygen, angina can occur.

## What does angina feel like?

Angina usually lasts for just a few minutes. Here's how people say it feels:

- Chest feels tight or heavy.
- Pressure, squeezing or burning in chest.
- Discomfort may spread to arm, back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Numbness or tingling in shoulders, arms or wrists.
- Feel short of breath (or hard to breathe)
- Sick to the stomach.

## When will I get angina?

You may get angina when you...

- Climb stairs or carry groceries
- Feel angry or upset
- Work in very hot or cold weather
- Have sex
- Have emotional stress
- Exercise

## What tests might I have?

- Blood tests
- Electrocardiogram (EKG or ECG)
- Exercise stress test
- Cardiac catheterization
- Coronary angiogram

## How is angina treated?

Your doctor may give you nitroglycerin, a medicine to relieve the discomfort.

Nitroglycerin...

- Comes as tiny tablets you put under your tongue, and as spray, capsules, skin patches and ointment.
  - Is safe and not habit-forming.
- Be sure to ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about...
- What to do if you get angina.
  - How to use your nitroglycerin the right way.

## What can I do about angina?

Don't give in to it! You can change your way of life and lower your chance of having angina attacks. A few simple steps can help you feel more comfortable every day:

- Stop smoking, and avoid other people's tobacco smoke.
- Eat healthy meals low in saturated fat, cholesterol and salt.
- Control high blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels.
- Avoid extreme temperatures.
- Avoid strenuous activities.
- Learn to relax and manage stress.
- Call your doctor if your angina changes. For example, if you get angina while resting or if it ever gets worse.

## How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721), or visit [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org) to learn more about heart disease.
3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit us online at [StrokeAssociation.org](http://StrokeAssociation.org).

We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.

Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

## What are the Warning Signs of Heart Attack and Stroke?

### Warning Signs of Heart Attack:

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly with mild pain or discomfort with one or more of these symptoms:

- **Chest discomfort**
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body**
- **Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort**
- **Other signs including breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness**

### Warning Signs of Stroke:

- **Sudden weakness or numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body**
- **Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding**
- **Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes**
- **Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination**
- **Sudden, severe headache with no known cause**

Learn to recognize a stroke. Time lost is brain lost.

Call 9-1-1... Get to a hospital immediately if you experience signs of a heart attack or stroke!

## Do you have questions or comments for your doctor or nurse?

- Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

Can I exercise?

When should I call my doctor?