

Emergency Services

Angina Chest Pain

What is your chest pain from?

We have determined that your chest pain is coming from your heart. This is called **angina** (sounds like ann-j-eye-na). Angina is caused by not enough oxygen getting to your heart muscle.

The blood flowing to your heart muscle is full of oxygen. Your heart muscle needs oxygen to pump. When your heart muscle does not have enough oxygen, it can cause you to have angina, or worse, it could result in a heart attack.

A **heart attack** is when the blood flow to a part of your heart muscle is blocked and no oxygen is getting to that part of the muscle. When this happens, heart muscle is damaged.

Is it angina or a heart attack?

Most people who have been told they have angina get to know the pattern of their angina attacks. They get to know what brings them on, what they feel like, and how to treat it.

If the angina pain changes or pain in your chest is new or different, you could be having a heart attack. People often describe heart attack pain as:

- A crushing or squeezing feeling in the chest
- A heavy weight on the chest

You may also notice any of these symptoms:

- Pain spreading to the arm, shoulder, neck, and jaw
- Stomach or belly pain
- Sweating
- Trouble getting your breath
- Feeling sick to your stomach (nausea) or throwing up (vomiting)
- Feeling dizzy or light-headed
- Changes in your heartbeat (fast, slow, or not regular)
- Feeling very weak or tired

What to do if you feel any of these signs?

- If have been told you have angina and you and your doctor have made a home treatment plan for how to deal with your angina attacks:
 - Follow that plan.
 - **Call 9-1-1 right away if:**
 - Your pain does not go away or gets worse following your home treatment plan.
 - You are not sure how to follow your home treatment plan.
- If you are having new and different chest pain than you are used to, or any of the other symptoms listed above:
 - **Call 9-1-1 right away.**

Angina Chest Pain - *continued*

To learn more, it's good to ask:

- Your family doctor
- Your pharmacist
- HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf and hard of hearing) or go online at www.HealthLinkBC.ca.