



YOUR INFORMATION

Pains from the Heart

PAINS FROM THE HEART

Your diagnosis

There are lots of different causes of chest pain, most of which may not be due to heart problems. Just having a pain in your chest does not necessarily mean it is your heart. Please discuss with your heart failure nurse or GP if you are unsure.

There are two main types of pain that we think could be related to heart disease.

Pericarditis

Chest pain coming from the heart can be as a result of inflammation from the lining of the heart which is called pericarditis. This pain is the same if it is caused by inflammation of the lining of the heart or the lung. It is usually a sharp pain worse on breathing in. Your GP will often be able to tell you if it is pericarditis or not and decide the most useful treatments and investigations for you.

Angina

This is pain that comes from the heart because less oxygen and nutrients are getting to the heart.

The commonest cause of this pain (and the commonest cause of heart failure) is ischaemic heart disease – narrowing of the blood supply to the heart.

Patients may experience 'angina', which involves chest pain or discomfort. The pain may not focus solely on the chest as it can vary, e.g. radiate down the arm/arms, through into the back or focus on the jaw.

Various factors can bring on your symptoms, including physical exertion, emotional distress and exposure to extremes of weather (varying from cold, heat or severe wind). You may also find a heavy meal will bring on chest pain.

Your cardiologist will tell you whether you are likely to have this condition and whether it relates to your heart failure. They will advise you of investigations and other treatments for it.

People with angina may be prescribed a variety of medication to treat their angina symptoms. However, changing some aspects of your lifestyle may improve symptoms. Physical activity, managing stress and anxiety, a healthy diet, weight control and stopping smoking are just some of those changes.

If you suffer from angina and you feel your symptoms are not under control or have changed then, discuss them with your healthcare professional. It is important to discuss things that appear to bring on your symptoms. For example: when do you experience your symptoms? Are they occurring at night? How long does the discomfort last? What appears to bring relief? How long does the discomfort last? How severe is the pain?

If you need to take GTN for angina

If you have angina and can identify what brings on your angina symptoms, you may be prescribed a short acting nitrate such as a GTN spray. This means that you can take your medication prior to undertaking the activity that brings on your angina. Taking GTN may cause you to become lightheaded or give you a headache. If this is causing you to worry, have a discussion with your healthcare professional.

- **Sit down and take your medication.**
- **If after five minutes you still continue to have discomfort, then take again.**
- **If you still continue to experience discomfort then call 999.**

Remember if the pattern or severity of your angina change then this will need to be brought to the attention of your GP to see if other investigations or treatments are needed.



Contact Pumping Marvellous



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heartfailureaware (open)



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helpforhearts (closed support group)

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