

> What is angina?

Angina is chest pain that occurs when blood supply to the muscles of the heart is restricted. It usually happens because the arteries supplying the heart (coronary) arteries become narrow due to a build-up of fatty plaques (atheroma). There are two main types of angina; stable and unstable angina.

Stable angina – angina attacks are brought on by an obvious trigger such as exercise. This type of angina improves with medication and rest.

Unstable angina – angina attacks are more unpredictable, occurring with no obvious trigger and continue despite resting.

> What are the symptoms?

A dull, heavy or tight pain in the chest that can sometimes spread to the left, neck, jaw or back. The pain is usually triggered by physical activity or stress and typically lasts for a few minutes.

> What are the causes?

Angina is mostly caused by atherosclerosis, which is the hardening and narrowing of arteries as a result of a build-up of fatty substances known as plaque. This can restrict the blood supply to the heart and trigger the symptoms of angina.

There are certain factors that causes the coronary arteries to narrow and increase your risk of angina. These include:

- High blood pressure
- A diet high in saturated fat and cholesterol
- Lack of exercise and being over weight
- smoking
- Type 1 and type 2 diabetes
- Age and family history

> What about treatment?

Treatment for angina aims to:

- Relieve symptoms during an angina attack
- Reduce the number of angina attacks
- Reduce the risk of a heart attack or stroke happening

Glyceryl trinitrate (GTN) is a medication widely used to provide immediate relief from symptoms of angina. GTN is available in tablet form or as a spray. Use your medication as directed by your prescriber. Dial 999 for ambulance if the pain continues for 5 minutes after taking a second dose of glyceryl trinitrate.

References

NICE: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg126/chapter/Introduction>

NHS UK: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/angina/treatment/>

Did you know that?

- Almost 2 million people in England currently have, or have had, angina.
- Heart attacks and strokes are the most serious complications of angina.
- Unstable angina should be regarded as a medical emergency, because it's a sign that the function of your heart has suddenly and rapidly deteriorated, increasing your risk of having a heart attack or stroke.

Self Care Tips

Having a healthy lifestyle is the most effective way of reducing your risk of angina and preventing your symptoms from getting worse.

Try to:

- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
- Avoid smoking.
- Reduce your alcohol intake, as alcohol can increase your blood pressure.
- Take regular exercise as this will help keep your heart and blood vessels in good condition, help you lose weight and lower your blood pressure.

Last reviewed November 2020

To contact Bromley Well call the Single Point of Access on **0300 3309 039** or Lifestyle Support on **07985 444210 / 07985 433045** Email enquiry@bromleywell.org.uk www.bromleywell.org.uk



> Further resources

<p>British Heart Foundation</p> <p>www.bhf.org.uk</p> <p>Help Line: 0300 330 3311</p> <p>heretohelp@bhf.org.uk</p>	<p>A national charity providing information and advice for the public and for health professionals. A really useful site containing lifestyle advice, the latest research and information about tests and treatments.</p>
<p>Bromley Heart Support Group</p>	<p>Meets quarterly at the Beckenham Beacon. Sessions consist of talks by experts followed by Q&A. Contact emily.vickery@nhs.net or 0203 930 0214 for details.</p>
<p>Heart UK</p>	<p>National cholesterol charity providing support and advice for people concerned about cholesterol. A great website packed with advice on healthy eating and maintaining a healthy weight, including recipe ideas and diet plans.</p>
<p>NHS Live Well</p>	<p>NHS Live Well pages have information on topics such as eating well, exercise and maintaining a healthy weight.</p>
<p>NHS Conditions Angina</p>	<p>NHS conditions pages contain information about the causes, symptoms and treatment of heart disease and advice for people living with the condition.</p>
<p>NHS Approved Apps</p>	<p>Links to NHS approved Apps designed to support you in making healthy lifestyle changes.</p>

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