

Heart attack and angina

The heart is the organ that pumps blood to make it circulate around the body. It is made of muscle called the myocardium. This muscle also needs a continuous supply of blood. If the coronary arteries that carry blood become clogged, the oxygen supply is cut off.

When the reduction in the flow does not last for long and does not cause any damage, it is known as **angina**, which is not too bad. When the flow is blocked for a long enough time, it causes a **heart attack**, and that part of the heart is damaged or dies.

What do you feel?

Crushing central chest pain, radiating to the arm, back or jaw, with general malaise, sweating and nausea.

How does the doctor make a diagnosis?

On the basis of what you tell him, the electrocardiogram (ECG) and blood tests. The ECG records the heart's electrical activity on paper and shows whether there has been any disturbance.

What should I do if I get chest pain?

Stop whatever you are doing and sit down. **Stay calm.**

Go to the **nearest health center** or call 112.

If you've already had one before:

Patients who have angina or who have had a heart attack should always carry nitroglycerin with them. Nitroglycerin needs to be protected from light. Carry it in a plastic container. If these precautions are not taken, you should replace it every six months.

The frequent use of nitroglycerin does not cause dependence nor does it decrease its effectiveness. It can cause headaches or dizziness in some patients because it lowers the blood pressure, but you must take it if you need it, despite any side effects.

If you **develop chest pain**, sit down and put a nitroglycerin tablet under your tongue, or spray twice if you have been given nitro spray, but do not swallow, and repeat in 5-10 minutes if you still have pain.



If the pain continues after you have taken 3 pills (one every 5 minutes) or sprayed 6 times (20 or 30 minutes), call 112 to get emergency help.

If the pain subsides, when you go to your doctor you need to tell him about the pain episode and describe what it felt like.

People who have heart disease should never smoke.