

Chest pain

Most chest pain is not a sign of anything serious but you should get medical advice just in case. Get immediate medical help if you think you're having a heart attack.

Call 999 or 112 if you have sudden chest pain that:

- spreads to your arms, back, neck or jaw
- makes your chest feel tight or heavy
- started with shortness of breath, sweating and feeling or being sick
- lasts more than 15 minutes

You could be having a [heart attack](#). You need immediate treatment in hospital.

Talk to your GP if

you have chest pain that :

- comes and goes
- goes away quickly but you're still worried

Get medical advice to make sure it's nothing serious.

Common causes of chest pain

In most cases, chest pain is not caused by a heart problem. Chest pain has many different causes.

Your symptoms might give you an idea of the cause. Do not self-diagnose. Talk to your GP if you're worried.

Chest pain symptoms	Starts after eating, bringing up food or bitter tasting fluids, feeling full and bloated
Possible cause	heartburn or indigestion
Chest pain symptoms	Starts after a chest injury or chest exercise, feels better when resting the muscle
Possible cause	chest sprain or strain
Chest pain symptoms	Triggered by worries or a stressful situation, heartbeat gets faster, sweating, dizziness
Possible cause	anxiety or panic attack
Chest pain symptoms	Gets worse when you breathe in and out, coughing up yellow or green mucus, high temperature
Possible cause	chest infection or pneumonia
Chest pain symptoms	Tingling feeling on skin, skin rash appears that turns into blisters
Possible cause	shingles

Chest pain and heart problems

The most common heart problems that cause chest pain include:

- pericarditis – usually causes a sudden, sharp, stabbing pain that gets worse when you breathe deeply or lie down
- angina or a heart attack – they both have similar symptoms but a heart attack is life-threatening

You're more likely to have heart problems if you're older or at risk of coronary heart disease.

For example, if you:

- smoke
- are very overweight (obese)
- have high blood pressure, [diabetes](#) or high cholesterol
- have a history of heart attacks or angina in family members under 60 years old

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