

ANGINA, is chest pain due to a lack of oxygen to the heart most often occurring in men age 35 or older and postmenopausal women. It is usually located right under the breast bone. Physical and emotional stress, as well as eating heavy meals, can bring it on. In a healthy person, these stresses are easily handled. In a person with an underlying heart condition like coronary artery disease, heart valve problem, arrhythmias or high blood pressure, the heart doesn't get enough blood (i.e. not enough oxygen to the heart muscles). Other causes could be due to a hyperactive thyroid disorder or anemia. People more likely to have angina may also have diabetes mellitus, be overweight, smoke, have a poor diet with lots of salt and fat, fail to exercise, have a stressful workload or have a family history of coronary artery disease.

**SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:**

- \* Pain in chest described as tightness, heavy pressure, aching or squeezing.
- \* The pain sometimes radiates to the jaw, left arm, teeth and/or outer ear.
- \* Possibly a left-sided numbness, tingling, or pain in the arm, shoulder, elbow or chest.
- \* Occasionally a sudden difficulty in breathing occurs.
- \* Pain may be located between the shoulder blades.

**TREATMENT:**

- \* Nitroglycerin relieves the immediate symptoms of angina in seconds. Carry it with you at all times.
- \* Other medications may be prescribed for the underlying heart problems. It is important to take them as prescribed by your doctor.
- \* Surgery may be necessary to open the blocked coronary arteries (balloon angioplasty) or to bypass them.
- \* Correct the contributing factors you have control over. Lose weight, don't smoke, eat a low-salt, low-fat

diet and avoid physical and emotional stresses that cause angina. Such stressors include anger, overworking, going between extremes in hot and cold, sudden physical exertion and high altitudes (pressurized airplanes aren't a risk).

Practice relaxation techniques.,\* Exercise! Discuss first what you are able to do with your doctor and then go do it.,\* Even with treatment, angina may result in a heart attack, congestive heart failure or a fatal abnormal heartbeat. Treatment decreases the odds that these will occur.,\* Let your doctor know if your angina doesn't go away after 10 minutes, even when you have taken a nitroglycerin tablet. Call if you have repeated chest pains that awaken you from sleep regardless if the nitroglycerin helps. If your pain changes or feels different, call your doctor or call 911 if the pain is severe.