

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT STABLE ISCHEMIC HEART DISEASE

In the Clinic
Annals of Internal Medicine

What is a stable ischemic heart disease?

- Stable ischemic heart disease occurs due to poor blood flow through the blood vessels in the heart.
- During times of activity or stress when the heart muscle works harder and needs more oxygen, it can cause pain or pressure in your chest.
- You may also feel angina in your shoulders, arms, neck, jaw, or back.
- The pain or pressure lasts for minutes, not seconds or hours, and goes away with rest or medication.
- Early diagnosis and treatment are important to reduce the risk for more serious complications.
- The most common cause is coronary heart disease, which results from the buildup of plaque in the arteries to your heart.

How is it diagnosed?

- Your doctor will perform a thorough history and physical examination and order blood tests to learn more about your condition.
- You may undergo painless tests to show how your heart is working, including an electrocardiogram, which measures the electrical activity of the heart muscle, and an echocardiogram, which creates moving pictures of how your heart is functioning.
- You may take a stress test, which provides information on how exercise affects angina symptoms and overall heart functioning.
- Other tests may be needed, such as cardiac catheterization or coronary angiography to study the arteries and heart functioning.



How is it treated?

- Your doctor may prescribe medications to help control high blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels, to help prevent heart attacks, and to help you live longer.
- A medication called nitroglycerin can reduce angina symptoms when they occur.
- If your arteries are clogged, your doctor may perform a nonsurgical procedure called percutaneous coronary intervention to widen them.
- Blockages that cannot be treated with percutaneous coronary intervention may need heart bypass surgery.

Can complications be prevented?

- Stop smoking.
- Make heart-healthy changes to your diet.
- Practice stress reduction.
- Exercise moderately on a regular basis.
- Take your medications.

For More Information

www.cardiosmart.org/Heart-Conditions/Coronary-Artery-Disease
www.cardiosmart.org/Heart-Conditions/Angina
www.cardiosmart.org/Heart-Conditions/Angina/Questions-to-Ask-Your-Doctor

Patient information on coronary artery disease and angina from the American College of Cardiology, including questions to ask your doctor.

www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartAttack/SymptomsDiagnosisofHeartAttack/Angina-Pectoris-Stable-Angina_UCM_437515_Article.jsp
www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartAttack/WarningSignsofaHeartAttack/Angina-in-Women-Can-Be-Different-Than-Men_UCM_448902_Article.jsp

Information on stable angina and on angina in women from the American Heart Association.

www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/
www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/materials_for_patients.htm

Information about heart disease from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including educational materials for patients.

ACP[®]

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
INTERNAL MEDICINE | Doctors for Adults