

## Types of Chest Pain

This table explains some of the common causes, signs and symptoms of chest pain. Please remember that this information is a guide only.  
**DO NOT USE FOR DIAGNOSIS. If symptoms persist, or you become unsure or concerned, please speak with your doctor.**

Name	Cause of chest pain	Symptoms of chest pain	Location of pain	How to relieve chest pain
<b>Angina</b>	Angina occurs when there isn't enough oxygen-rich blood flowing to part of your heart. Angina is caused by narrowed coronary arteries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ discomfort</li> <li>♥ tightness</li> <li>♥ pressure</li> <li>♥ squeezing</li> <li>♥ heaviness</li> <li>♥ dull ache</li> </ul> <p>Additional symptoms may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ nausea</li> <li>♥ shortness of breath</li> <li>♥ strange feeling or tingling/numbness in the neck, back, arm, jaw or shoulders</li> <li>♥ light headedness</li> <li>♥ irregular heart beat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ May be felt in the centre of the chest or across the chest, into the throat or jaw, down the arms, between the shoulder blades</li> <li>♥ <b>Unstable angina</b> may be unrelated to activity or stress, comes on more frequently or takes longer to ease</li> </ul> <p>Angina symptoms can gradually get worse over 2 to 5 minutes. <b>Angina usually lasts less than 15 minutes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ Rest</li> <li>♥ Anginine – dissolved under the tongue <b>or</b> Nitrolingual spray-sprayed under the tongue</li> </ul>
<b>Heart Attack</b>	A heart attack happens when plaque cracks inside the narrowed coronary artery - causing a blood clot to form. If the blood clot totally blocks the artery, the heart muscle becomes damaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ similar to angina <b>however last longer than 15 minutes and are not relieved by rest, Anginine or Nitrolingual spray</b></li> </ul> <p>Additional symptoms may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ nausea</li> <li>♥ vomiting</li> <li>♥ pale skin</li> <li>♥ shortness of breath</li> <li>♥ sweating</li> </ul> <p><b>Heart attacks can also occur with unusual chest pain or no pain</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ unable to pinpoint exact spot</li> <li>♥ May be felt in the centre of the chest or across the chest, into the throat or jaw, down the arms, between the shoulder blades</li> </ul>	<p><b>A heart attack is a medical emergency.</b></p> <p><b>If pain is not relieved by Anginine or Nitrolingual spray in 10 to 15 minutes, call 000 for an ambulance.</b></p> <p><b>Stop any physical activity</b></p>

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<b>'Stent' Pain</b>	Stent pain is quite common after a coronary stent is inserted and is thought to be caused by stretching of the artery during the procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● sharp</li> <li>● niggling</li> <li>● localized</li> <li>● fleeting</li> <li>● comes and goes</li> <li>● <b>not related to physical activity</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● middle or left side of chest</li> <li>● can usually pin point the spot where it hurts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● relaxation</li> </ul> <p>Symptoms will disappear with time as stent settles in</p>
<b>Pericarditis</b>	Pericarditis is irritation and swelling "inflammation" of the hearts sac that surrounds the heart. Causes include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● viral infection</li> <li>● heart attack</li> <li>● <b>(Dressler's Syndrome)</b> – usually occurs 2-5 weeks after heart attack</li> <li>● recent heart surgery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● sharp</li> <li>● stabbing</li> <li>● pain not relieved with rest</li> </ul> <p>Additional symptoms may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● fever</li> <li>● weakness</li> <li>● shortness of breath</li> <li>● coughing</li> <li>● heart palpitations (feeling your heart beating faster)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● middle or left side of chest and can travel to one or both shoulders</li> <li>● pain worse when lying down and deep breathing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● sitting up and leaning forward</li> </ul>
<b>Musculoskeletal pain after open heart surgery</b>	It is common to have some chest discomfort after your surgery as your muscles, ligaments, bones, nerves and wounds are healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● aches (dull or sharp)</li> <li>● pains</li> <li>● numbness or tingling on chest</li> <li>● skin feels sensitive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● middle or left side of chest</li> <li>● may last for 6 months or more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● try holding a pillow or towel against your chest when you cough or sneeze</li> <li>● try a different position</li> <li>● use pain killers <b>regularly</b></li> <li>● try massaging and touching chest around the wound to desensitize the nerves</li> </ul>

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<b>Pulmonary embolism or "PE"</b>	A pulmonary embolism occurs when there is a sudden blockage, usually caused by a blood clot, of an artery in the lung	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ sharp or stabbing chest pain - worse when you take a deep breath</li> <li>♥ burning, aching, dull or heavy sensation in chest</li> <li>♥ sudden shortness of breath</li> <li>♥ cough that can produce blood stained mucus</li> </ul> Additional symptoms may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ fast heart rate</li> <li>♥ sweaty, clammy skin</li> <li>♥ dizziness or light headedness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ middle or on one side of chest</li> </ul>	<p><b>A pulmonary embolism is a medical emergency.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ doctors will prescribe medications to dissolve the clot and prevent clots from getting larger</li> </ul>
<b>Gastro Oesophageal Reflux Disease "GORD"</b>	GORD occurs when stomach acid leaks from the stomach into the oesophagus (food pipe)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ burning chest pain, pressure, discomfort or "heartburn" - <b>often worse after eating</b></li> <li>♥ chest pain not likely to be associated with physical activity or exercise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ middle or on one side of chest which can move up to neck and throat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ sitting up or standing upright</li> <li>♥ antacid medication</li> <li>♥ avoiding certain foods and drinks</li> </ul>
<b>Anxiety</b>	The body's stress response causes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ tightening of the chest and rib cage muscles</li> <li>♥ stomach and intestinal distress causing chest pain</li> </ul>	Pain can be described as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ sharp, shooting or burning</li> <li>♥ pressure or chest tension</li> </ul> Pain can range from slight to severe and can be related to episodes of nervousness, anxiety, fear or elevated stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ can be located all over chest area and spread to upper back</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♥ stress management</li> <li>♥ relaxation - deep breathing</li> <li>♥ rest</li> </ul>