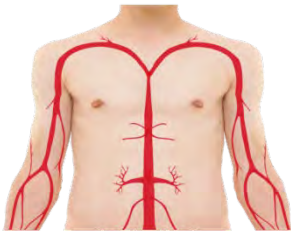


## 12 Common Health Conditions

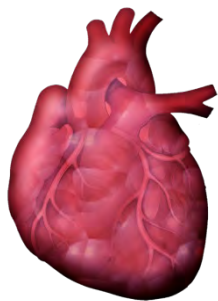
# Coronary Heart Disease



Your heart is a muscle about the size of your fist. It pumps blood around your body to keep you alive.



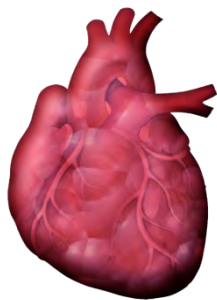
Blood flows to and from the heart through tubes called arteries.



The heart gets its own supply of blood through tubes on the heart's surface – these are called **coronary arteries**.



Sometimes blood cannot flow properly through these tubes to the heart because fatty substances block them.



This is known as coronary heart disease.



Coronary heart disease is a big cause of death.



## What causes heart disease?

Coronary heart disease can be caused by:



- Smoking.



- Having high **cholesterol**.

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance that's found in all the cells in your body.



- Having high **blood pressure**.

This is how much effort your heart uses to pump blood around your body. High blood pressure puts a strain on your heart.

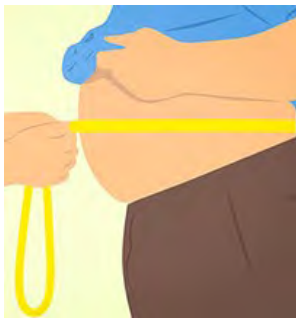


- Not doing regular exercise.



- Having **diabetes**.

This is when there is too much sugar in your blood.



- Being overweight.



- Having a family member with chronic heart disease.



A healthy lifestyle can help you to make the risk of getting heart disease smaller.

Try to:



- Eat a healthy, balanced diet.



- Keep active by doing things like walking and swimming.



- Stop smoking.

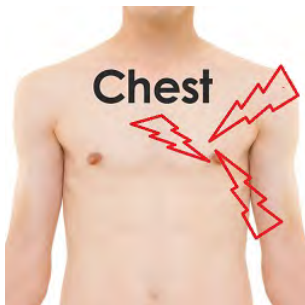


## What Are The Symptoms Of Coronary Heart Disease?



Symptoms are signs that something is wrong.

The symptoms of coronary heart disease can include:



- Chest pain (called **angina**).

This is the most common symptom of coronary heart disease.



This can be a mild, uncomfortable feeling in your chest.



Or it can be a painful feeling of heaviness or tightness, usually in the middle of your chest.



Angina often happens when you have been using your body to do things like running, exercise or heavy lifting.



- Heart palpitations.

This feels like your heart is pounding, or beating at different speeds.



- Feeling out of breath.



- Having a heart attack.

This usually feels like strong chest pain. You might also feel:



- Pain in other parts of your body.



○ Light headed.



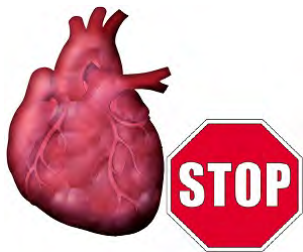
○ Sweaty.



○ Sick.



○ Out of breath.



● Heart failure.

This is when your heart stops working. It becomes too weak to pump blood around your body.



## Tests

If your doctor thinks you might have coronary heart disease, they will do some tests. This will include:



- Asking you questions about your medical and family history.



- Asking you questions about your lifestyle, like what food you eat and what exercise you do.



- A blood test.



- A check of your blood pressure.





The doctor might then send you for some more tests.

This could include x-rays and scans.



## Treatment

Coronary heart disease **can't be cured**.

This means it won't go away.



But treatment can help to manage your symptoms and help you to feel better.



Treatment can also help to make the risk of getting heart disease or having a heart attack smaller.



Treatment can include:

- Changing your lifestyle.



- Taking medicine.



- Having an operation.



You can change your lifestyle by:

- Doing more exercise.



- Eating more healthily.



- Stopping smoking (if you smoke).



You might need to take medicine.  
There are lots of different medicines  
your doctor might give you.



Your doctor might ask you to try  
different medicines until they find the  
one that works best for you.

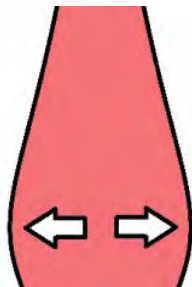


You must not stop taking heart  
medicines without speaking to your  
doctor as this can make you ill.



You might need to have an operation.

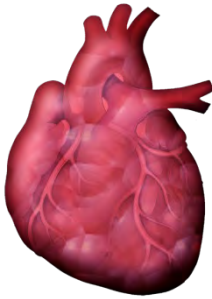
There are some different types of  
operation:



- Having treatment to widen arteries  
blocked with fatty substances. This  
is called **angioplasty**.



- Having treatment to help blood flow a different way to your heart, instead of through the blocked artery. This is called **bypass surgery**.



- Having your heart replaced with a healthy heart from a donor. This is called a **heart transplant**.

Not many people need to have a heart transplant.



## Getting better

If you have a heart attack or have surgery, your life may be different.



But after a while your life may go back to normal.



If you have surgery there is a team of people who will support you to get better.

They are called the **cardiac rehabilitation team**.



They will visit you in hospital and may visit you when you are back at home.



Once you feel better, it is important that you exercise and eat healthily. This will help to protect your heart.



You might like to talk to other people who have heart problems.

Ask your GP for information about a support group you could join.



If you can't go back to work after having heart surgery, you may be able to get benefit money to help you.

[Contact the Disability Service Centre](#)



## Making the risk of getting heart disease smaller

A healthy lifestyle can help you to make the risk of getting heart disease smaller.



Eat a healthy, balanced diet:



Eat lots of fibre. Fibre is found in foods like wholegrain breakfast cereals, fruit and vegetables.



Eat foods high in unsaturated fat like oily fish, nuts and seeds.



Don't eat too much salt.



Don't eat foods high in saturated fat like meat pies, sausages, butter, cream, hard cheese, cakes and biscuits.



Don't eat too much sugar.



Keep active by doing things like walking and swimming. This makes your heart work harder and keeps it healthy.



Keep to a healthy weight. Speak to your GP to find out what a healthy weight is for you.



Take any medicine your doctor has given you.



Stop smoking. Ask your GP to help you.



Don't drink too much alcohol.

Made by The Easy Health Team at Generate, updated in 2021.

Images from Photosymbols and Canva.