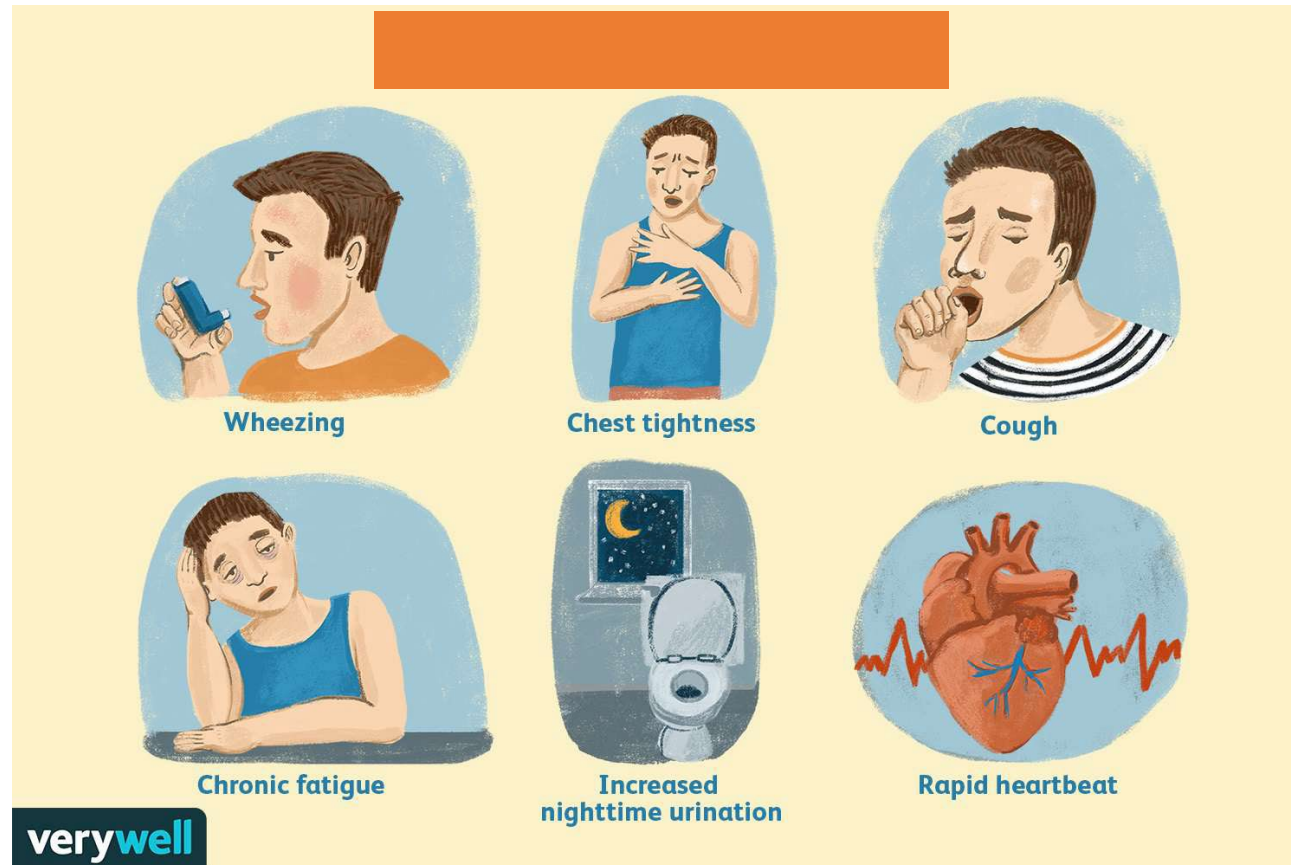


What Do My Symptoms Mean?

Sharon Myers RN, MA



Symptoms Can Be Confusing

- Fatigue/Weakness
- Shortness of Breath
- Back Pain
- Chest Pain



What Can Cause Fatigue/Weakness?

- Poor sleep
- Over-exertion
- Medication –Change, missed or extra dosing. New medication.
- Chronic Disease- Heart Problems, Lung Disease, Dementia, Kidney Disease, Cancer, Chronic Pain
- Emotional Issues-Stress, Depression, Worry
- Blood Problem- Anemia, and other blood abnormalities
- Dietary –Low protein, electrolytes, B-12
- Diabetes -High or low Blood Sugar
- Sleep apnea



When To See a Health-Care Provider for Fatigue

- When fatigue is associated with other symptoms such as chest pain, shortness of breath, irregular or fast heartbeat.
- Feeling that you might pass out.
- Severe stomach, pelvic or back pain.
- Unusual bleeding, including bleeding from the rectum or vomiting blood.
- Severe headache.
- Worsening ability to walk or stand due to fatigue
- It is getting worse /lasts longer than a week

What Can Cause Shortness of Breath?

- Exertion- Exercise, Activity
- Stress/Excitement
- Obesity
- Cardiac - Heart Attack, Heart Failure, Arrhythmia, Valve
- Lung Issue- Bronchitis, Asthma, COPD, Emphysema
- Anemia
- Allergic Reaction – Seasonal Allergies, Medication, Food, Insect sting



"Any tightness or difficulty breathing?"

When to See a Health-Care Provider for Shortness of Breath

- Severe shortness of breath that comes on suddenly and affects your ability to function.
- Shortness of breath accompanied by high fever, chills, cough
- Oxygen saturation less than 92%
- Seek emergency medical care if your shortness of breath is accompanied by chest pain, fainting, nausea, a bluish tinge to lips or nails, or a change in mental alertness, O₂ saturation 88% or less



What Can Cause Back Pain?

- Heart Attack
- Musculoskeletal Strain- Pulled muscle
- Herniated Disk
- Fracture of Vertebrae or Rib
- Arthritis
- UTI/Bladder Infection
- Kidney Stone
- Pulmonary Emboli



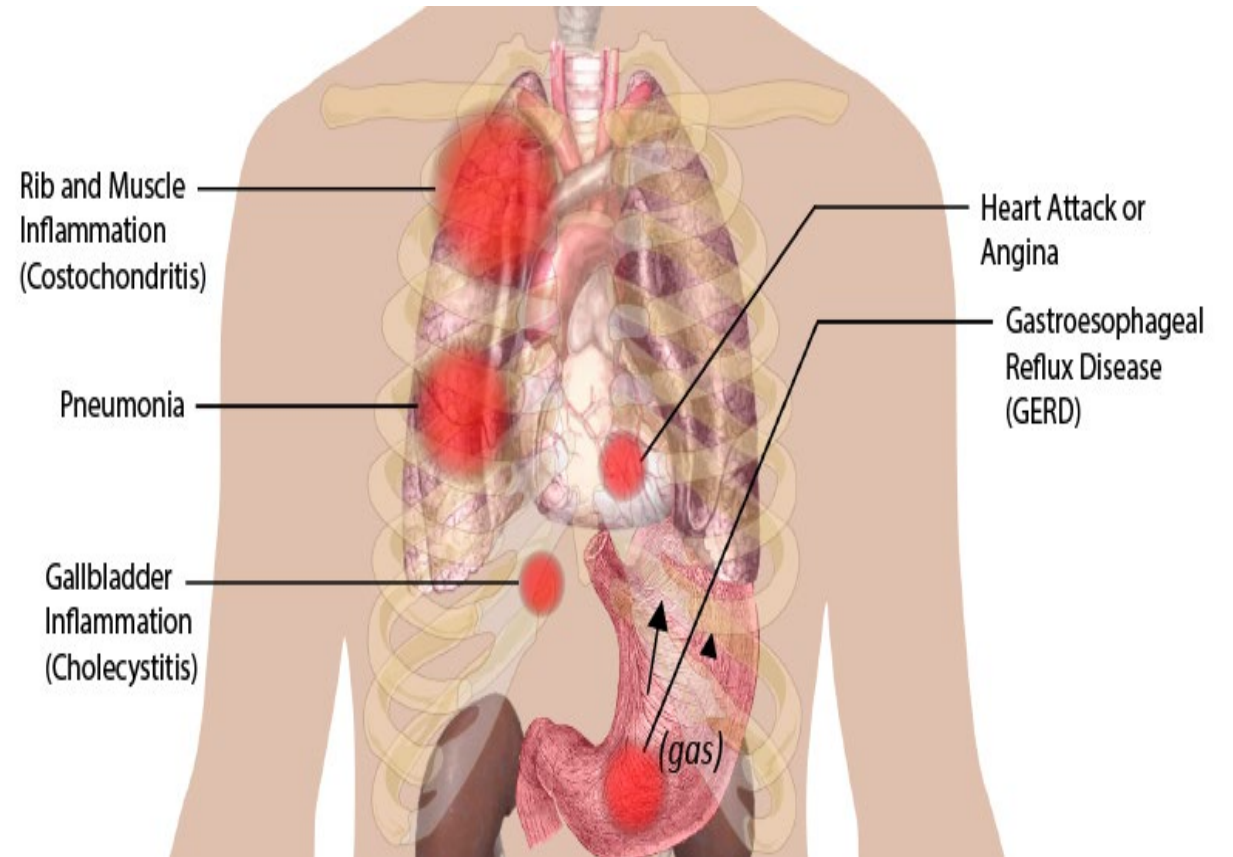
When To See a Health-Care Provider for Back Pain

- Back pain persists for 2 weeks or more
- Pain limits your ability to do walk, stand, or care for yourself
- Loss of sensation or decreased ability to use your legs or arms
- If pain is severe
- Go to ER if you have back pain associated with a fever, chest pain, or shortness of breath
- Go to ER if you have loss of ability to control your bowel or urination
- Sudden onset back pain that occurs after a trauma such as fall or accident

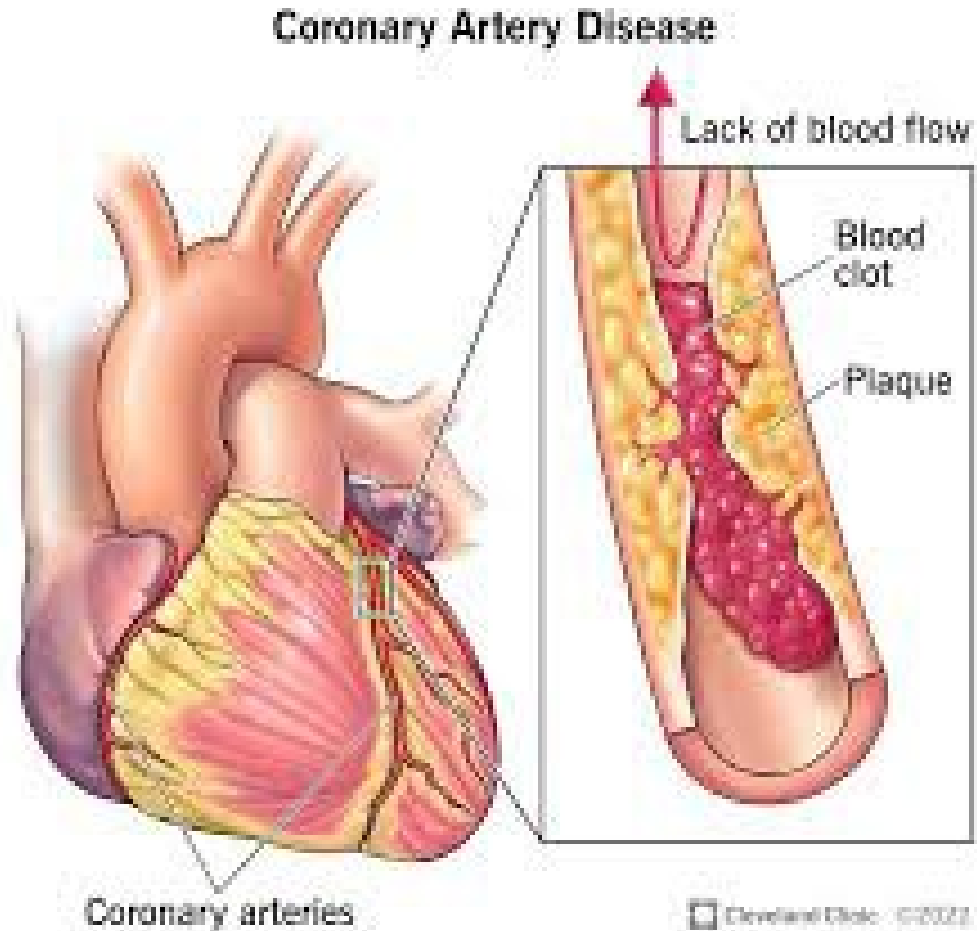


What Can Cause Chest Pain?

- Musculoskeletal Problem
- Gastrointestinal – GERD, Gastritis
- Cardiac – Angina, Heart Attack, Arrhythmia, Heart Failure, Valve Problem
- Pulmonary Embolism
- Respiratory- Pneumonia, Covid, Flu, Virus, Asthma, Emphysema
- Gallbladder
- Anxiety



Chest Pain From Coronary Artery Disease

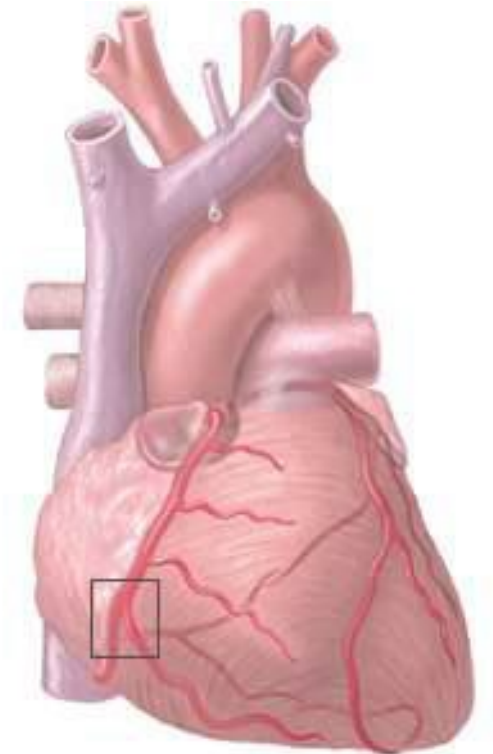


What is Angina?

- Angina is chest pain or discomfort caused when your heart muscle doesn't get enough oxygen-rich blood
- Angina is not a disease. It is a symptom of an underlying heart problem, usually coronary heart disease (CHD)
- Angina happens when one or more of the coronary arteries is narrowed or blocked, also called ischemia

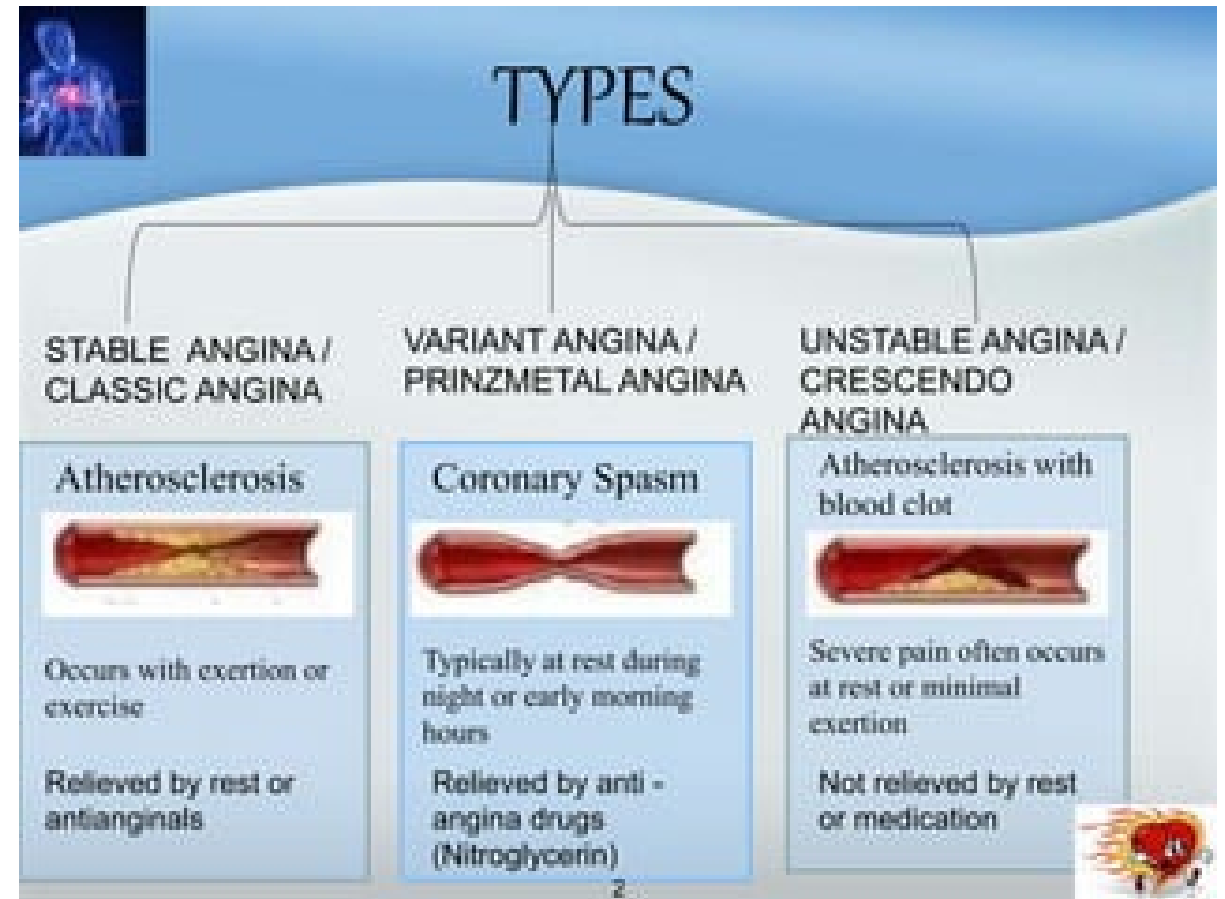


Blockage in right coronary artery



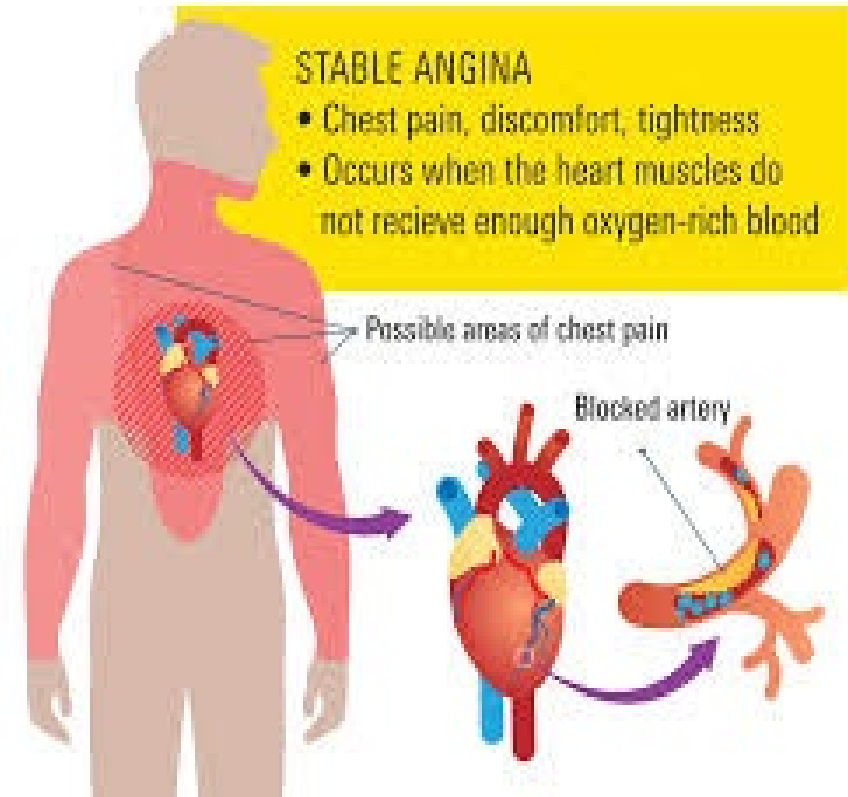
Types of Angina

- Stable angina
- Unstable angina
- Variant or Prinzmetal angina
- Microvascular Angina



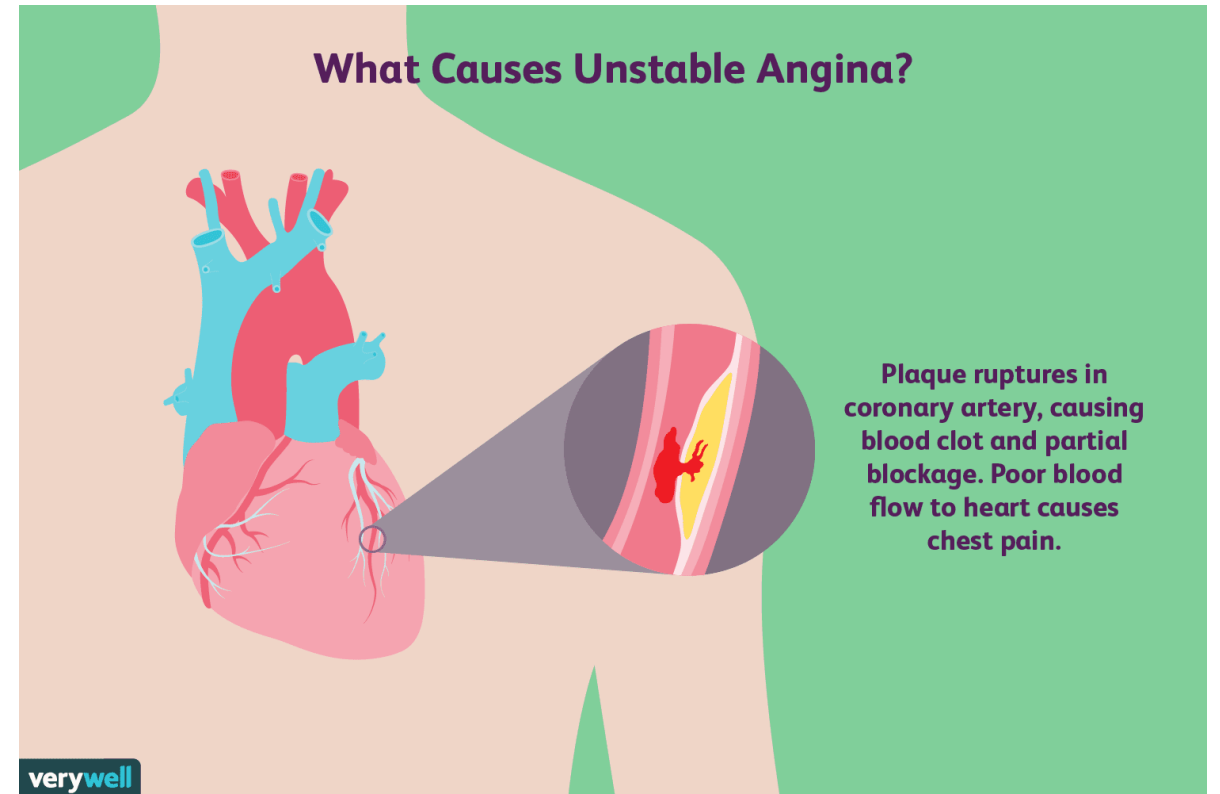
Stable Angina

- Also called “effort angina”
- Discomfort is precipitated by activity
- Minimal or no symptoms at rest
- Symptoms disappear after rest/cessation of activity



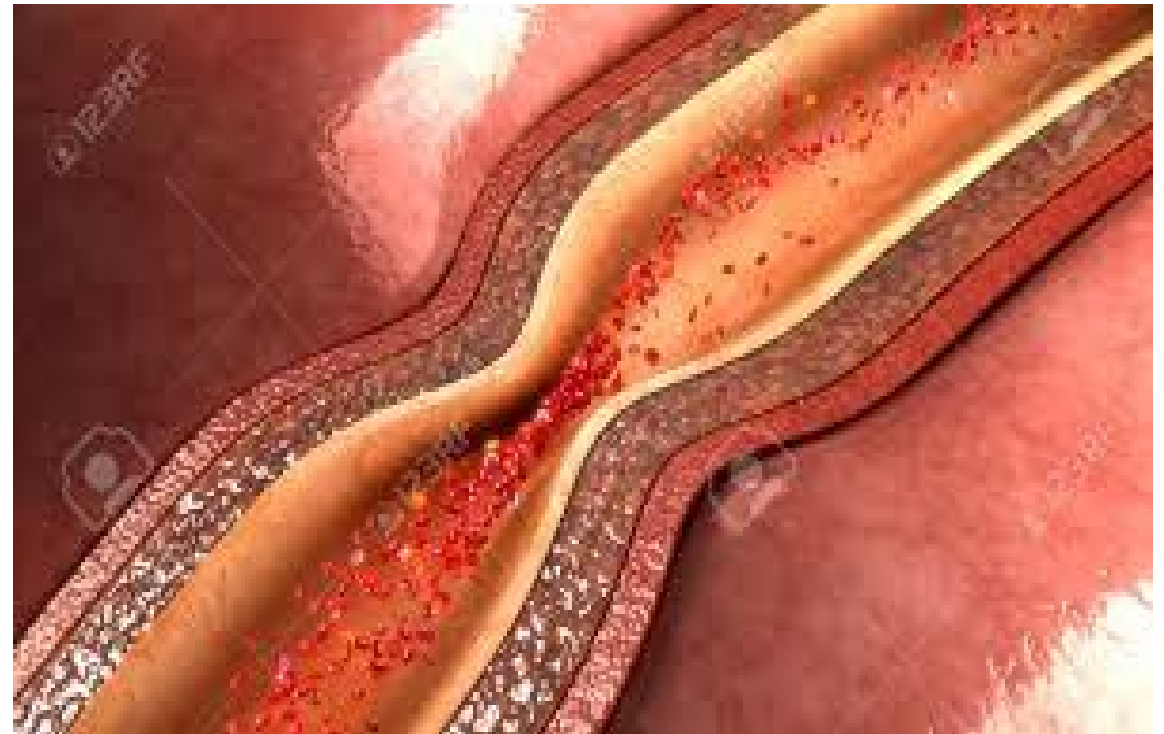
Unstable Angina

- Also called “Crescendo angina”
- Doesn’t have a specific pattern of occurrence e.g. Can occur at rest, during night, anytime.
- Severe and of acute onset
- A dangerous type of angina that puts you at high risk for having a heart attack



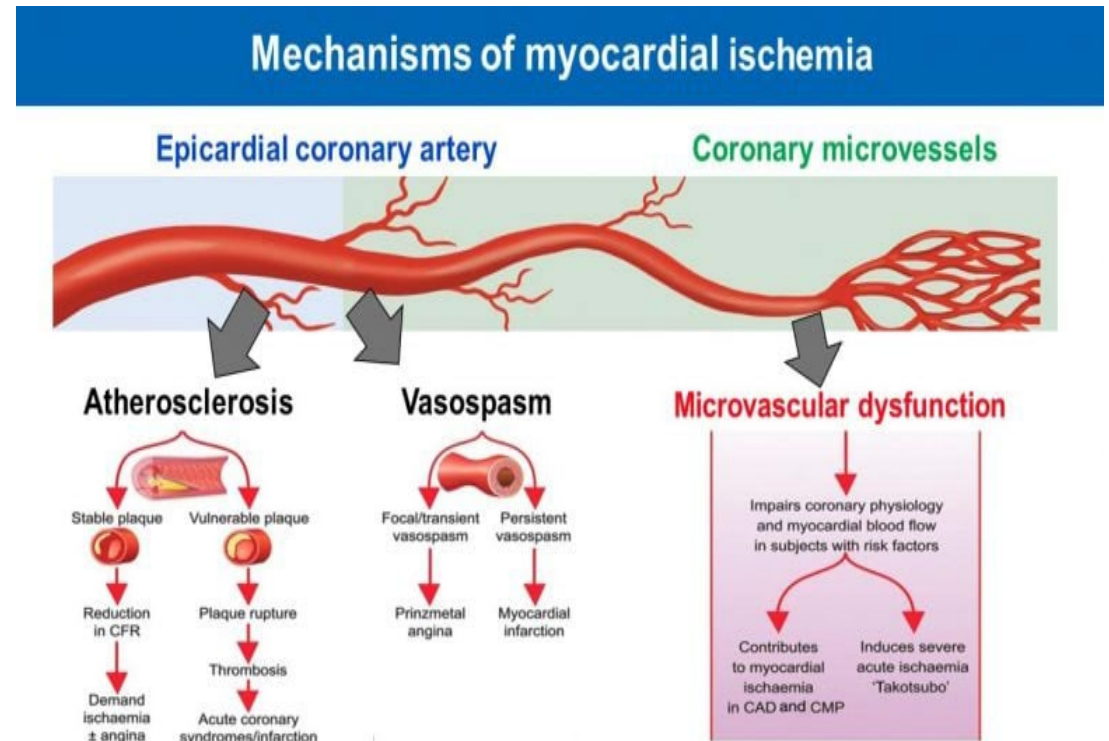
Prinzmetal or Variant Angina

- Prinzmetal angina is a variant form of angina with normal coronary vessels or minimal atherosclerosis
- It is probably caused by spasm of coronary artery



Microvascular Dysfunction/Angina

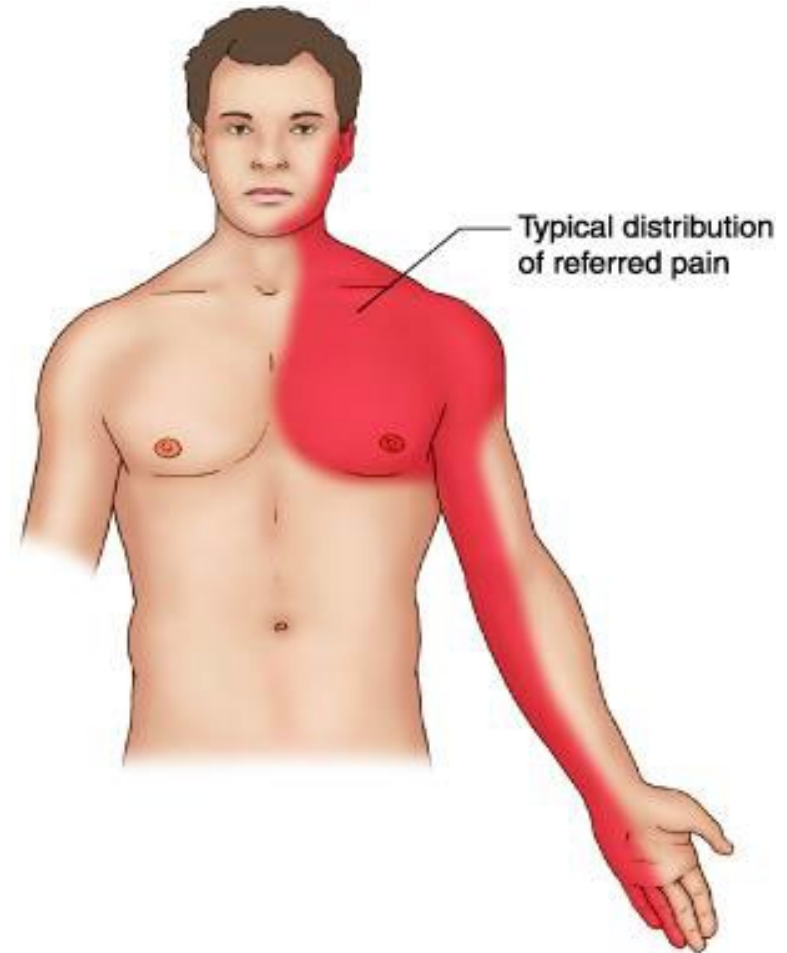
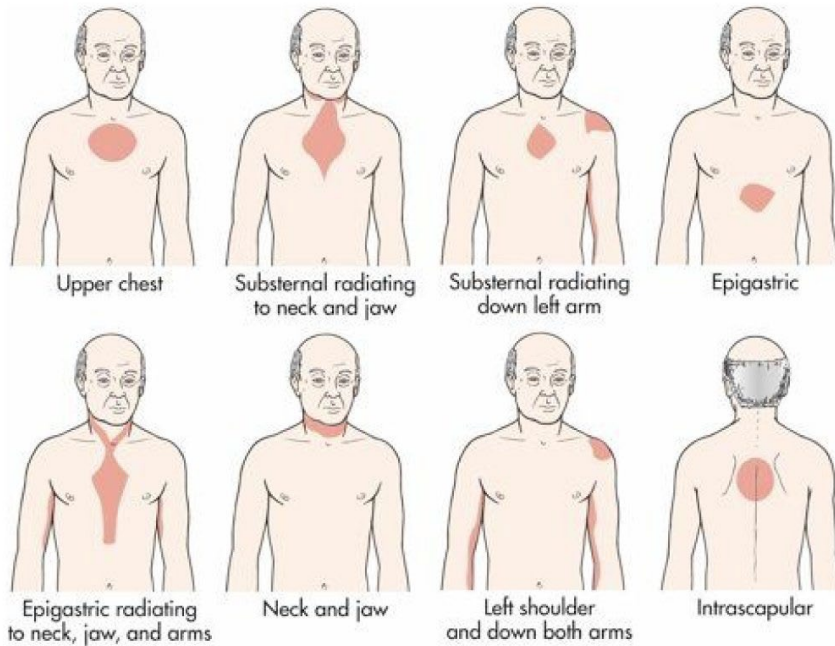
- Due to poor functioning of the small blood vessels of the heart, arms and legs
- No arterial blockage in the large coronary arteries
- Microvascular dysfunction may be one of the earliest signs of heart disease, and it may lead to [atherosclerosis](#) (plaque or blockages in arteries)
- More common in women



Locations of Angina



LOCATION OF CHEST PAIN DURING ANGINA OR HEART ATTACK



Call 911- Why?

- 40% of the 1.1 million heart attacks that occur annually in the U.S. are fatal. That's about 460,000 deaths from heart attack.
- Many more patients who survive their heart attacks do so with chronically damaged hearts.
- You can't evaluate your own angina

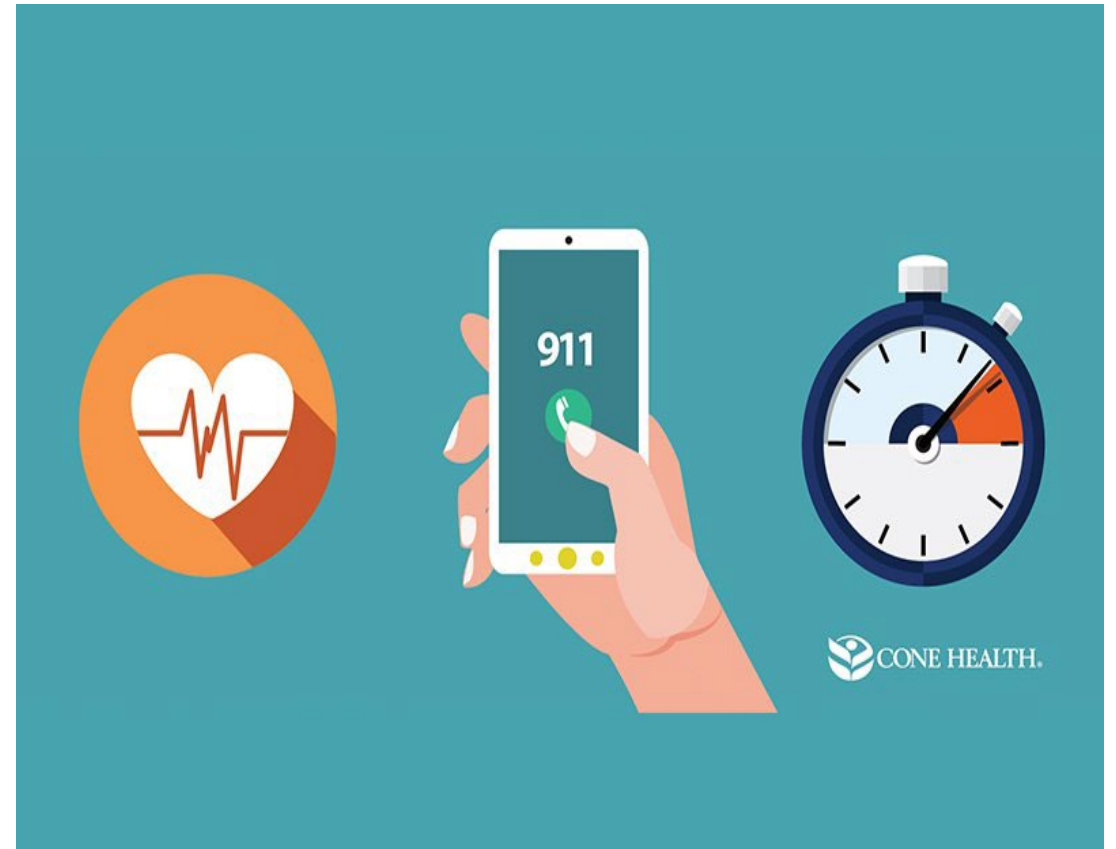


Tests to Evaluate Angina or Chest Pain

- Blood tests – Cardiac Troponin
- Electrocardiogram (ECG)
- Echocardiogram
- Cardiac catheterization
- Cardiac computerized tomography (CT) scan-X-Ray
- Cardiac magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)-Magnetic Radio waves
- Positron Emission Tomography (PET)- Dye

When to Call 911

- Trust your gut, and error on side of caution
- Chest pain that lasts for 5 minutes or more or comes back
- Chest pain not relieved by NTG-
Take 1 tab under tongue every 5 minutes x 3
- Severe shortness of breath
- Combination of symptoms: chest pain, nausea, shortness of breath, weakness, sweating



Call 911

- **Do not “phone a friend”, or call the Sac State Cardiovascular Wellness Program, or drive yourself to the ER.**
- Calling 911 is almost always the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment
- Emergency medical services (EMS) staff can begin treatment when they reach you. They are trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped.
- Also, you’re likelier to get treated faster at the hospital if you arrive by ambulance.
- Time is muscle



People Delay in Calling 911

- Time is muscle- Most of the heart muscle damage occurs within the first 90 minutes after onset of symptoms
- Why do we delay calling 911?
 - Want to wait for pain to disappear
 - Don't think its serious e.g. think its just a “dull pain”
 - Don't want to be regarding as a hypochondriac
 - Don't want to disturb the hospital
 - Want to talk to a relative first



Why People Don't Call 911...

“I was at work when I first had a symptom and I found an area to hide in till I felt better. I knew something was very wrong, but I never had a sense of doom. I had that *I'm indestructible* thought”.



Why People Don't Call 911...

“When I had my heart attack, I didn't think it was chest pain because so many of the guidelines say “*central chest pain*”. My pain was up near my neck and esophagus. And it kept coming and going. Very confusing. Even “*arm pain*” confused me because I imagined a sharp pain on the outside of the arm and what I was experiencing was sense of pressure from armpit to elbow. Although I have to admit I didn't want it to be cardiac-related”.



Why People Don't Call 911...

“I had the pain in my neck and shoulder blades. Checking Google, I was convinced I had lung cancer. And I thought the indigestion was just too much spicy food. Thank god I did not have a heart attack, but my widow maker artery was 89% blocked”.



Your Symptoms Mean Something
Make the Connection to the Cause

