



## Coronary Artery Disease: Know the Signs

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For more information  
visit the following website:

Centers for Disease Control  
([https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/coronary\\_ad.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/coronary_ad.htm))

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*This is an informational series designed to provide  
specific ideas for a healthy and safe lifestyle.*

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*Coronary artery disease (CAD), a leading killer in the United States, is a condition that reduces blood flow through the arteries to the heart muscle.*



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*The disease occurs when the arteries become narrow from cholesterol that hardens into plaque buildup. Because of the artery constriction, a sufficient supply of oxygen-rich blood is not able to reach the heart. This oxygen shortage often causes chest pain (angina) to occur.*

## The Signs

Angina causes a dull, heavy pressure in the middle of the chest, similar to a crushing feeling. Angina can be mild, moderate or severe. Other symptoms may include a burning sensation in the chest, sharp chest pain or pain that runs to the right arm or the back. Although angina is not the only condition that may be caused by CAD, it's one of the major conditions.

## Heart Attack Symptoms

CAD puts you at risk for a heart attack. The following symptoms—usually more than one of these—may be a signal of a heart attack:

- Pressure, a squeezing sensation or pain in the center of the chest lasting more than a few minutes.
- Pain—mild to severe—shooting to the arm, shoulder or neck. Pain that feels like tightness, pressure or burning and may be in the chest, upper abdomen, neck, jaw or inside the arms or shoulders.
- Sweating, nausea, fainting or shortness of breath.
- A pale appearance and/or cold, sweaty skin.

**Seek medical attention immediately if you believe you are having a heart attack.**



## Good News

Deaths due to CAD have declined in recent years. If appropriate actions are taken in time and the patient follows the doctor's orders, a person with CAD has a good chance of living a normal life. It's important to find out the possible reasons you have been diagnosed with CAD. Studies have linked the disease with lifestyle choices such as diet and exercise, as well as genetics. What your doctor can discover from your medical history, and that of your relatives, may help other members of your family minimize their risk for developing this serious disease.