

# What is coronary heart disease



## Your heart is the most important muscle in your body that needs a continuous blood supply

Coronary arteries are the blood vessels that supply your heart muscle with blood rich in oxygen.

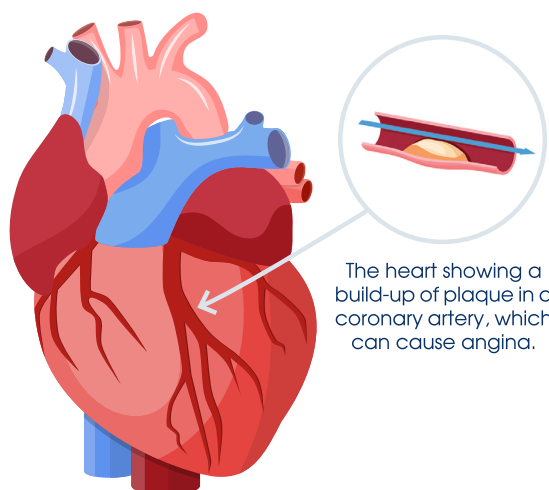
Coronary heart disease (CHD) is a type of heart disease where oxygen-rich blood cannot reach the heart due to the build up of plaque.

Plaque is made of fat, cholesterol and other materials that can get “sticky” and cause blockages over time. This is called atherosclerosis and reduces the oxygen-rich blood being pumped to your heart.

Coronary heart disease causes angina and heart attacks, where the heart does not receive the oxygen and nutrients it needs.

### What is angina?

Angina is a temporary pain or discomfort you feel when part of your heart muscle does not get enough oxygen-rich blood. It may feel like pressure, squeezing, tightness or burning in your chest, shoulders, arms, neck, jaw or back. You may also experience pain throughout the body, feeling faint, difficulty breathing or nausea. Angina is not the same as a heart attack.



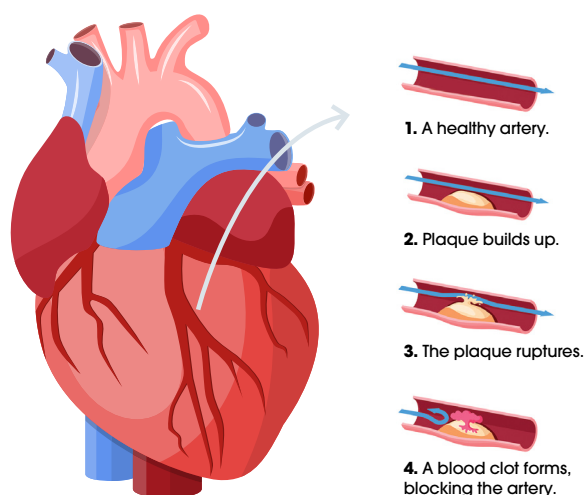
The heart showing a build-up of plaque in a coronary artery, which can cause angina.



Scan the QR code or visit [myheartmylife.org.au](https://myheartmylife.org.au) to join MyHeart MyLife - a free support program for people living with heart disease.

## What is a heart attack?

A heart attack is usually caused by fatty plaque blocking a coronary artery or breaking away (rupturing) and forming a clot. This can limit the blood and oxygen supply and cause damage to the heart muscle around the blocked artery. Damage continues to occur the longer a blockage is left untreated. Early treatment can open the blocked artery and get blood flow back to the heart muscle. A heart attack can also be called a myocardial infarction (MI).



Watch video

## Looking ahead

While coronary heart disease is a life-long condition, you can still live a long, healthy and fulfilling life. It's also important to have regular check-ups with your doctor to monitor your condition.



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