

## STORING YOUR MEDICATION

- Check expiry date on all medications
- Nitrolingual spray lasts for five years
- Store spray in a cool place
- If you keep a spare spray in the car it should be replaced after three years
- Lycinat tablets must be changed every three months
- Lycinat tablets lose their effect if they are too old which may be indicated by absence of tingling or burning sensation in the mouth
- Keep Lycinat tablets stored in the refrigerator in the bottle in which they were dispensed
- Lycinat tablets should not be exposed to warmth, light or air
- Do not throw out the specially-treated cottonwool packing in the bottle of Lycinat tablets
- For daily use, a few Lycinat tablets can be carried in a small airtight container. These Lycinat tablets should be thrown away after one week
- Carry a GTN spray or tablets at all times
- Always have a sufficient supply of medication on hand.

## LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

**Dealing with angina is not just a matter of dealing with the symptoms.**

- Look at all the risk factors for coronary heart disease, including: raised blood pressure, cigarette smoking, raised blood cholesterol, diabetes, excess weight and lack of physical activity
- Lifestyle changes which will improve heart health include:
  - Reducing the intake of saturated (animal) fats
  - Increasing the intake of fruit and vegetables and wholegrain cereals
  - Being smokefree
  - Having regular blood pressure checks
  - Enjoying regular physical activity
  - Maintaining a healthy body weight
  - Developing ways to cope with stress.

## WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE FOR ANGINA?

Coronary artery bypass surgery or angioplasty (opening up the arteries with a special balloon) can also help control angina. An X-ray of the coronary arteries (angiogram) is required to decide whether surgery or angioplasty is necessary or possible.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANGINA AND A HEART ATTACK?

- Angina symptoms are associated with a temporary reduction in blood flow to part of the heart muscle leaving no damage to the muscle. Angina pain is relieved by rest and Lycinat tablets or GTN spray. Angina that lasts more than 15 minutes will need more treatment.
- A heart attack results from a blockage in a coronary artery and causes permanent damage to the heart muscle. The pain associated with a heart attack usually lasts longer than fifteen minutes and is not relieved by Lycinat tablets or GTN spray.



**If your pattern of angina alters or worsens discuss it with your doctor immediately.**

## CONTACT INFORMATION

The Heart Foundation is dedicated to reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease – heart, stroke and blood vessel disease – for all New Zealanders.

Since our formation in 1968, we have assisted people with cardiovascular disease, funded vital heart-health research, supported health professionals in their practice, developed health promotion activities, informed and educated the public – and worked with high risk groups through dedicated prevention programmes. In fact, since our inception, heart disease death rates in New Zealand have halved.

Thanks to the generosity and support of the New Zealand public, our charity is able to continue with ground-breaking work into the future. Thank you for helping us provide the very best heart health information and funds for cutting edge research – efforts we hope will help keep New Zealanders together for longer.

For more information about heart health and/or supporting the Heart Foundation, please contact:

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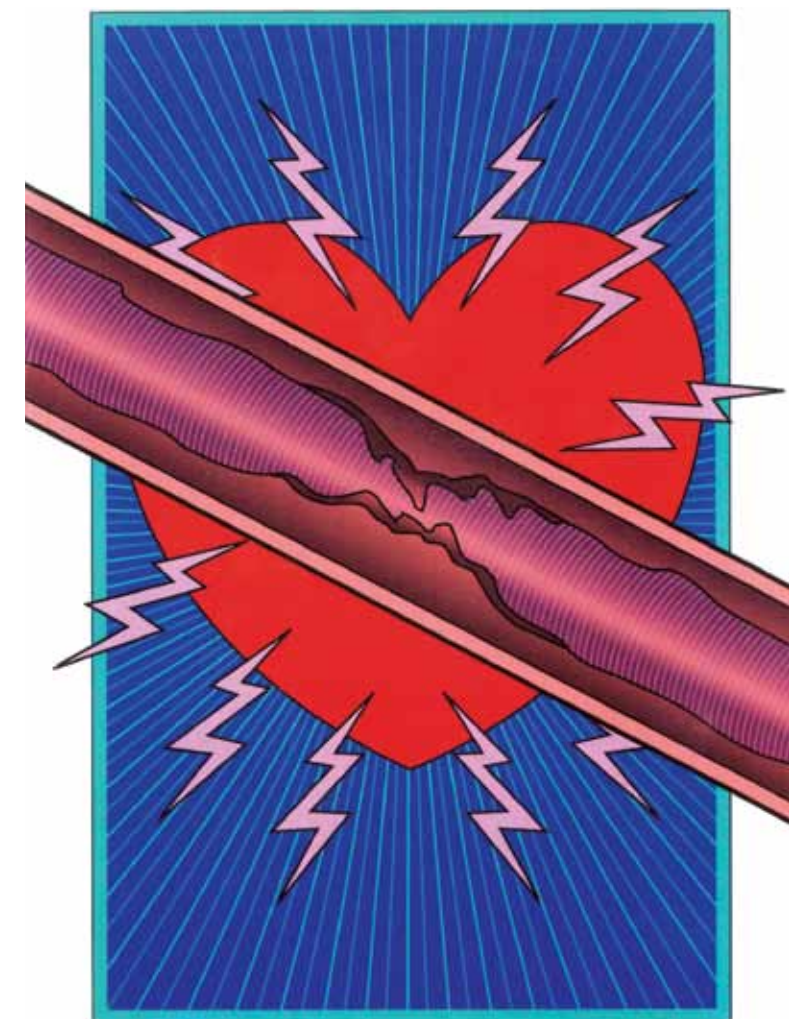
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# MANAGING

# YOUR ANGINA

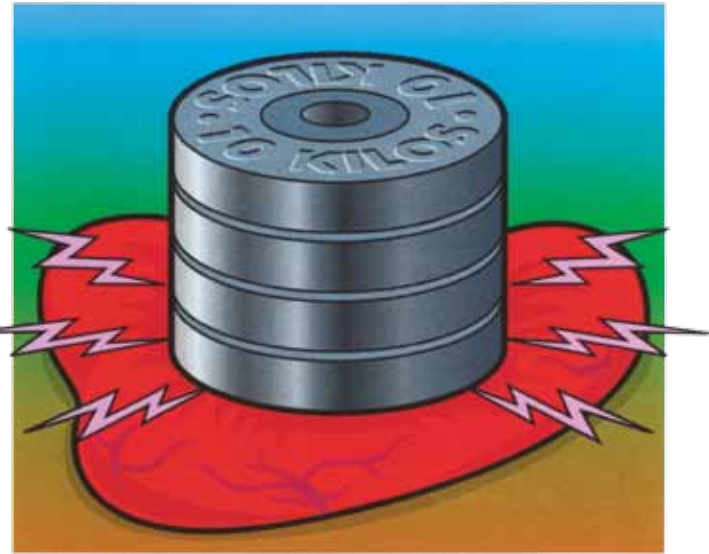


## WHAT IS ANGINA?

Angina is a common symptom of heart disease. It is usually described as a discomfort or unpleasant feeling (like indigestion), tightness, pressure or weight on the chest and sometimes a feeling of breathlessness. Angina usually only lasts a few minutes and can be relieved by rest and/or medication.

**Angina can affect people in different ways.** The symptoms may differ at various times. It is usually felt across the centre of the chest. It may also be felt in either or both shoulders, the neck or jaw, down one or both arms and in the hands. Some people experience it in only one of these areas and not in the chest at all.

Angina is usually brought on by exertion, emotion, a heavy meal or cold weather. It can occur at rest or even during the night. It can often be experienced at particular times of the day, e.g. first thing in the morning or late afternoon.



## WHAT CAUSES ANGINA?

In most cases angina is caused by coronary artery disease. This occurs when fatty deposits build up under the inner lining of the coronary arteries which supply the heart muscle. As a result, these arteries become narrowed and the blood flow to the heart muscle is reduced. Angina occurs when the blood flow to the heart muscle is insufficient for the extra demands made on it. There is no damage to the heart muscle from an episode of angina.

## ANGINA ACTION PLAN

### ANGINA SYMPTOMS OCCASIONAL

When you get angina, stop what you are doing and sit down. When the angina is relieved by rest, or by your GTN spray or Lycinat tablets, you can resume your activities gently.

### ACTION

Take one or two puffs of your GTN spray, or half to one Lycinat tablet. If the angina persists, you can repeat the dose safely every five minutes.

**If the angina is not relieved after three doses within 15 to 20 minutes, call an ambulance. DIAL 111 IMMEDIATELY.**

### ANGINA SYMPTOMS REGULAR PATTERN

If you get angina as part of your everyday life, for example:

- Cold temperatures
- Walking up hills
- Mowing lawns
- While showering
- During sexual activity
- While at work.

### ACTION

Use your GTN spray or Lycinat tablets a few minutes before attempting the activity that triggers your angina.

**If you are experiencing angina symptoms every day consult your doctor so that further treatment can be planned.**

### CHANGE IN ANGINA SYMPTOMS

If the pattern of your angina changes significantly in one or more of the following ways:

- Frequency, severity
- More prolonged
- Occurs when you are doing very little or resting.

### ACTION

Consult your doctor within 24 hours. In the meantime, continue to use your GTN spray or Lycinat tablets.

**If the angina is not relieved after three doses in 15 to 20 minutes, call an ambulance. DIAL 111 IMMEDIATELY.**

## MEDICATIONS

Nitrates are the most common way to manage angina and are prescribed by a doctor. They relax the blood vessels, causing them to dilate and allow the blood to flow more freely.

### Nitrates

Short Acting	Long Acting
Spray, e.g. Glytrin	Tablets
Tablets, e.g. Lycinat	Patches

### Glyceryl Trinitrate (GTN) Spray

- A metered dose of nitrate is given each time the button is pressed. The spray droplets are absorbed quickly and give an almost immediate effect
- Do not shake the canister
- Hold the canister upright
- Spray one or two puffs on, or under, the tongue
- Close the mouth
- If the angina is not relieved after three doses within 15 to 20 minutes **call an ambulance. Dial 111 immediately.**



### Lycinat (GTN) Tablets

- Lycinat is absorbed in the blood stream from the lining of the mouth
- It does not work if it is just swallowed whole
- Quarter or half a tablet may be enough to relieve your angina
- Place the tablet under your tongue and let it dissolve
- For a more rapid effect chew the tablet and let the pieces dissolve in your mouth
- If the angina is not relieved after three doses within 15 to 20 minutes **call an ambulance. Dial 111 immediately.**

## LONG-ACTING MEDICATION

### Nitrate skin patches

- These are the longest acting forms of nitrates and are absorbed through the skin
- Place the patch on a different part of the skin each time
- Place it on the body trunk (front or back, upper arms or legs). Make sure skin is free of hair, rashes, cuts, scars or callouses
- Do not put the patch in a skin fold such as the elbow or under the breast
- Put on the daily skin patch at the same time each day. After

a shower or bath, wait until the skin is completely dry before attaching the patch

- If the patch gets wet when swimming or bathing, it's okay. Water will not stop it working
- Keep skin patches at room temperature. Change as prescribed by the doctor.

### Nitrate Tablets or Capsules

There are a variety of long-acting tablets that the doctor may prescribe. These medications are absorbed through the stomach instead of the mouth and have a longer-acting effect.

### Beta-Blockers

Beta-Blocker medication reduces the frequency of angina attacks. They slow the heart rate letting the heart pump more efficiently which results in improved physical activity levels.

### Calcium Antagonists

These are further options for preventing angina symptoms. Calcium antagonists help to relax the arteries, allowing more blood to flow through so that the heart beats more efficiently. All of these medications are prescribed by your doctor.

## SIDE EFFECTS OF MEDICATIONS

- Lycinat (GTN) tablets and GTN spray sometimes produce flushing, headaches, a feeling of fullness in the head, dizziness or palpitations. These may be avoided by taking quarter or half a tablet or by spitting out the tablet once relief of symptoms is obtained
- Lycinat tablets and GTN spray may also cause a burning or tingling feeling in the mouth
- Lycinat tablets temporarily lower the blood pressure and may cause a feeling of faintness when using them for the first time or taking too large a dose. It is best to be seated when taking Lycinat tablets or GTN spray for the first time
- Feeling faint can also be caused by taking the spray or a tablet when hot, e.g. after a shower
- If taking longer-acting medications and experiencing these side effects, discuss them with the doctor
- Despite the side effects that can occur with these medications, they are safe to use and are not habit-forming
- Alcohol may be consumed while taking these medications. However, alcohol may increase the likelihood of faintness and dizziness
- Discuss any concerns about the side effects of medications with the doctor.