

Chest pain or angina

This handout lists the warning signs for a heart attack, tips about how to avoid chest pain, and when and how to take nitroglycerin. It also describes the benefits of learning CPR.

Heart attack warning signs

- Pain or ache in chest, neck, jaw, shoulder, or arm
- Heavy or pressure feeling in chest that may spread to neck, shoulder, or arm
- Heartburn or pain in upper chest
- Heart beats very fast or skips a beat
- Feel faint or lightheaded
- Sweat a lot
- Short of breath
- Sick to stomach (nausea)

Be active, but take it slow and easy

- Do not do hard chores or activities:
 - No yard work
 - Do not shovel snow
 - Do not lift heavy objects
 - Do not go outside when it is very cold or very hot
- What may cause chest pain
 - Walking up a lot of stairs
 - Hard exercise like jogging
 - Active moving like dancing

How to make things easier at home

- Put bed near bathroom
- Use a bed pan or commode
- Put phone by bed
- Put phone near where you usually sit
- Keep things you use a lot closer to you
- Plan ahead so you do not have to get up and down a lot
- Ask other people to help you

Nitroglycerin

- When to take it (ask your doctor)
 - When a chest pain starts
 - Before you do an activity that can cause chest pain
- How to take it (ask your doctor)
 1. Put a pill under your tongue or use a spray
 2. Repeat in 3 to 5 minutes
 3. Repeat 1 more time
 4. If not better, call 9-1-1

Chest pain or angina (cont)

CPR can save your life

- Ask your family and friends to learn CPR
- If your heart stops
 - They call 9-1-1
 - Then they start CPR right away
 - This could save your life
- CPR classes are given at most community centers
 - Call your community center to find out about CPR classes
 - Contact the American Heart Association to find a class near you
 - Call 877-AHA-4CPR (1-877-242-4277)
 - Go online to www.americanheart.org
 - You can also call the local Red Cross or go online to www.redcross.org

The content in this letter is intended as general information and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. This information is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice or services.
