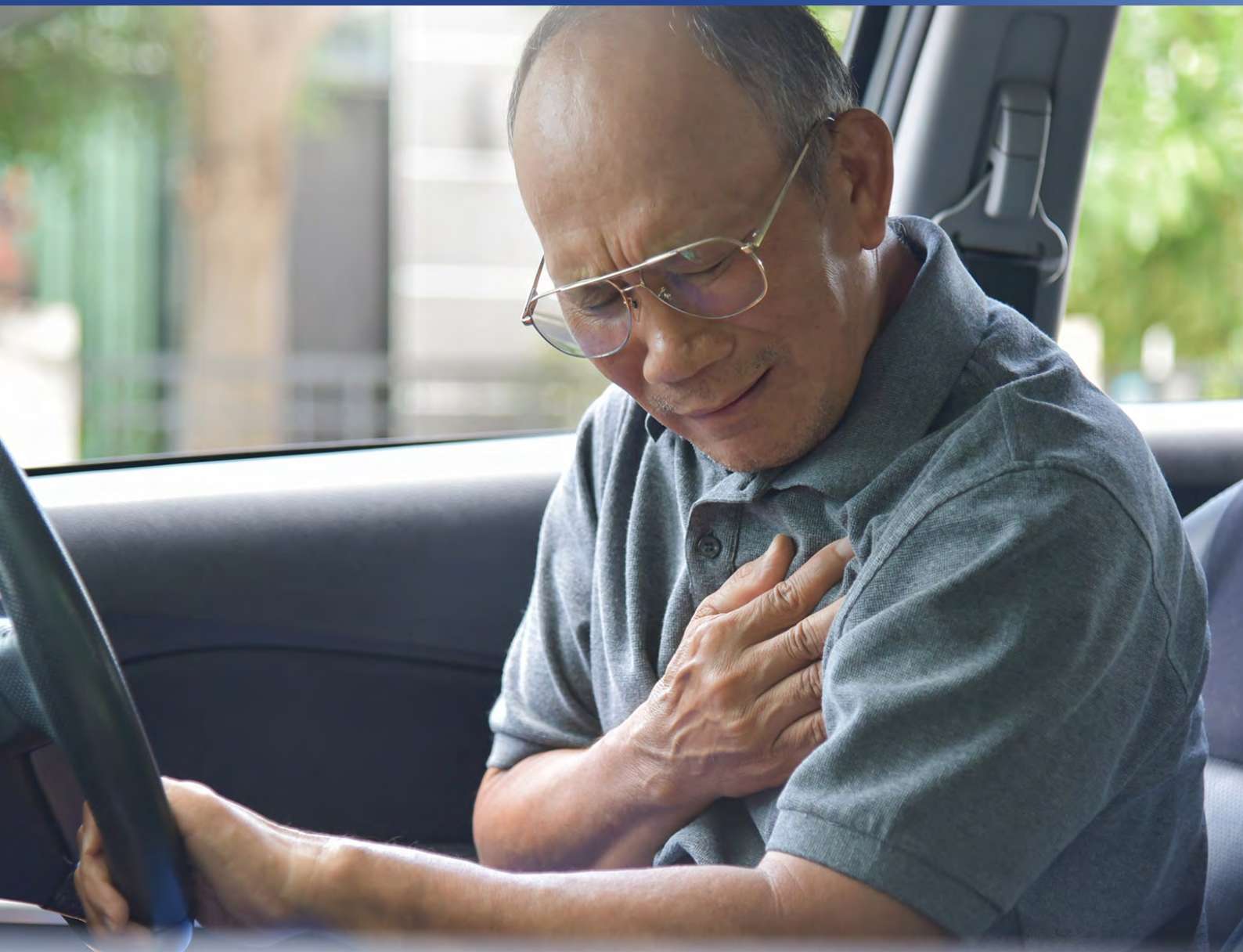


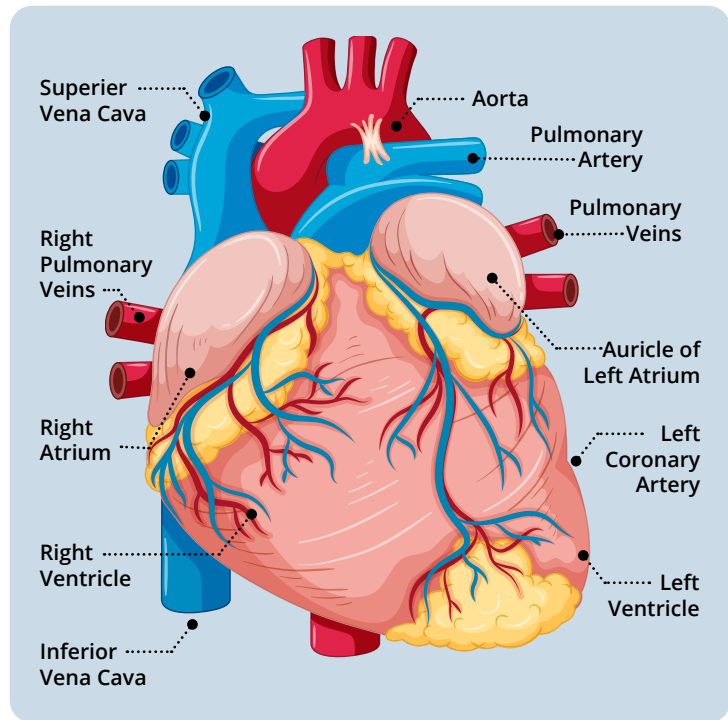
A Guide for Patients and Families

Advice for Heart Attack Patients



What is Heart Attack?

The heart is a muscular pump, which moves blood (containing oxygen and nutrients) through the body. It gets the blood and energy it needs from the coronary arteries.



What causes Heart Attack?

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) is caused by the build-up of cholesterol and fatty deposits called plaques. These plaques can gradually clog the artery and thus reduce blood flow to the heart muscle.

Without adequate blood supply, there is lack of oxygen and nutrients for the heart to work properly. This can lead to chest pain while walking or stable angina.

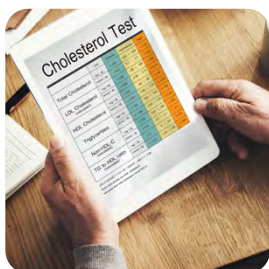
A blood clot can form suddenly over these fatty deposits and cut off blood supply to the heart muscles. Because this occurs suddenly, there is no time for the heart to form extra blood vessels and the heart muscle may be injured.

This is called unstable angina and if there is heart muscle damage, a heart attack or myocardial infarction occurs. This is much more serious.

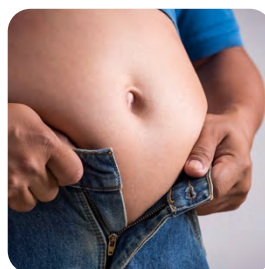


What are Risk Factors of Heart Attack?

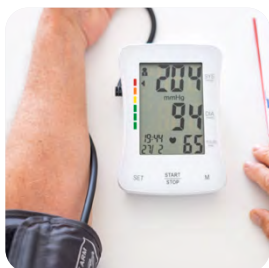
PATIENTS ARE AT RISK IF THEY HAVE:



High cholesterol



Obesity



Hypertension



Smoking habit



Diabetes



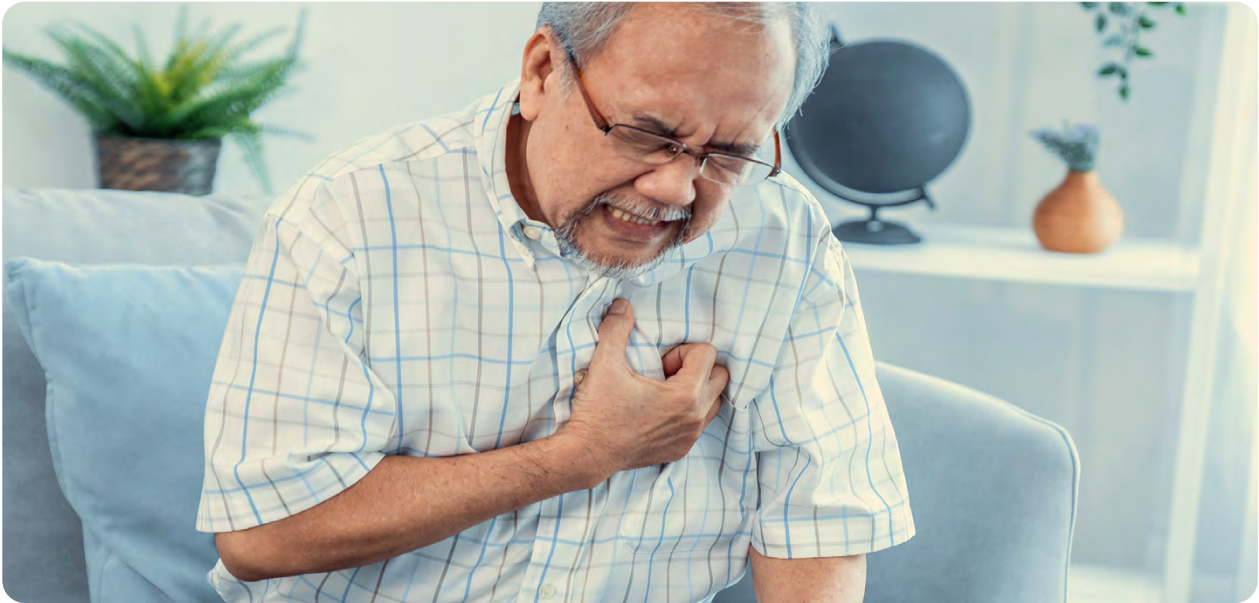
Lack of regular exercise








Strong family history



What are the symptoms of a Heart Attack?



Different patients may present with ~~very different~~ complaints. Patients with heart attack typically complain of 

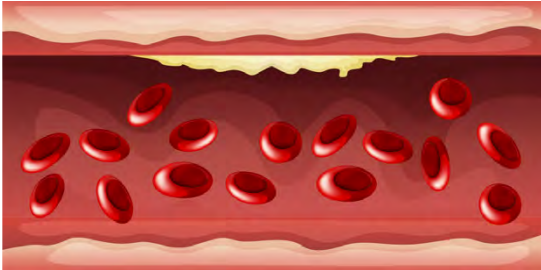
- ◆ ~~Discomfort lasting more than 5 minutes~~ 
- ◆ The discomfort has been described by many as  a heaviness or tightness and may only be mild in nature
- ◆ It is typically spread out and  not localised to a single spot
- ◆ ~~Classically it occurs in the center of the chest however this is not always the case~~ 
- ◆ ~~It may also be felt in the stomach, arm, neck or jaw~~
- ◆ ~~It may come on with exertion~~

Any discomfort associated with these symptoms should be  taken seriously

- ◆ Shortness of breath
- ◆ Dizziness or fainting
- ◆ “Cold sweat” or sweating even when it is not warm
- ◆ Nausea or vomiting

How do we treat Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)

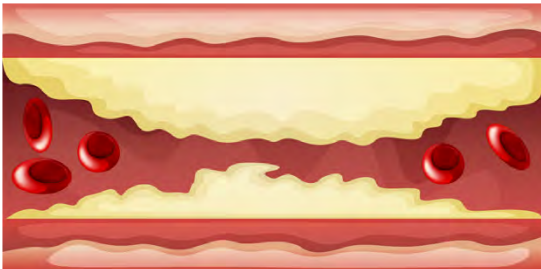
TREATMENT FOR CAD WITHOUT ANGINA



This is when there is a build-up of fatty deposits without blockage of the arteries. Patients are still at risk of a heart attack.

The key of treatment would be to reduce cholesterol and hypertension and the factors that lead to them such as obesity, diet, smoking and lack of exercise.

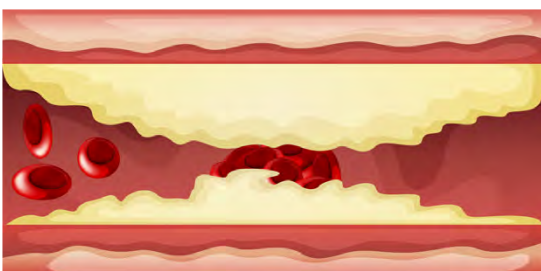
TREATMENT FOR CAD WITH STABLE ANGINA



This is when there is a blockage due to the fatty deposits.


Treatment for this would be the same as if there is no blockage, unless the blockage affects one or more large arteries. The doctor may then recommend a procedure to bypass or to unblock it.

TREATMENT FOR CAD DURING AN ACUTE MYOCARDIAL INFARCTION



In this case, a blood clot has suddenly blocked off a major blood vessel, an urgent procedure to unblock the artery is vital.

Lifestyle changes:

~~You may be able to control how much your angina (chest pain) bothers you by making changes to your lifestyle.~~ 

~~You may find it helpful to note the following:~~

MEDICATIONS



- ◆ Take all medications as instructed by your healthcare professionals

DIET



- ◆ Eat balanced and nutritious meals
- ◆ Choose foods that are high in fibre, such as wholegrain foods, vegetables, fruits and beans
- ◆ Avoid foods which are high in saturated and trans fat, such as deep-fried foods, pastries and cakes
- ◆ Limit cholesterol-rich foods such as organ meat (offal), shellfish and eggs
- ◆ Limit the amount of salt in your diet
- ◆ Limit the amount of alcohol intake - the recommended amount is less than 2 drinks a day for men and less than 1 drink a day for women

ACTIVITIES



- ◆ Over the next 2 weeks: Activities should increase gradually from light to moderate
- ◆ Stop activity if you experience chest pain, cold sweat or increasing shortness of breath
- ◆ Avoid heavy lifting (more than or equivalent to 5 kg) that causes discomfort or pain in the chest
- ◆ Follow the exercises / activity programmes as recommended by your healthcare professionals

OTHERS



- ◆ Do not smoke
- ◆ Reduce stress
- ◆ Avoid extreme cold or hot environments
- ◆ Drivers must refrain from driving for at least one month after a heart attack
- ◆ Remember to attend your follow-up cardiac appointments

How can you reduce your risk of getting CAD?



Keep a healthy body weight



Do not eat more than what you need



Exercise three times a week



Stop smoking



Keep your blood pressure, cholesterol or diabetes under control and take medications prescribed by your doctor



Ask your doctor if you are at risk of a heart attack and what else you should be doing to reduce that risk



You may wish to proceed to your own attending or nearest hospitals for medical attention and advice.



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