

Glossary of Terms

Angina

Angina is a symptom of coronary artery disease (CAD) and is typically a recurring feeling of pain or discomfort in the chest due to myocardial ischemia, i.e. an inadequate supply of blood and oxygen to the heart muscle resulting from narrowing or blockages in the coronary arteries.

Stable angina is the most predictable and prevalent form. Physical exertion is the most common trigger, although emotional stress and exposure to extreme temperatures also may lead to anginal episodes. The angina attacks typically last no more than five minutes and are usually relieved by rest and/or nitroglycerin.

Unstable angina is unpredictable. Patients experience symptoms without an obvious trigger, often while they are at rest. The discomfort may be more severe, prolonged (as long as 30 minutes) and different in character than stable angina symptoms.

Angioplasty

An invasive procedure performed to reduce or eliminate blockages in coronary arteries. A catheter with a deflated balloon near the tip is guided to the blood vessels of the heart. Once the blocked area is reached, the balloon is inflated to widen the artery and increase blood flow. The balloon is then deflated and the catheter is removed.

Cardiac Bypass Surgery

A surgical procedure used to restore blood flow to the heart muscle by bypassing the blocked area. A blood vessel is usually removed from the leg or chest and reattached to bypass the blockage in the coronary arteries. This procedure is also known as a coronary artery bypass graft (CABG) procedure.

Cardiogenic Shock

Cardiogenic shock is a life-threatening condition resulting from the failure to maintain adequate blood supply to the circulatory system and other organs. The major cause of cardiogenic shock is a severe heart attack leading to damage to a significant portion of the heart muscle rendering it unable to pump sufficient blood to maintain an adequate cardiac output to support the body's needs. Symptoms may develop immediately or may take several hours to appear. Symptoms include sweating, cold hands and feet, nausea and shallow, rapid breathing.

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

A chronic condition in which the heart muscle gradually weakens and cannot pump enough blood to meet the needs of the rest of the body. CHF is a complication of many serious diseases in which the heart loses its full pumping capacity, causing blood to back into other organs, especially the lungs and liver. Heart failure develops over time as the pumping action of the heart grows weaker. It can affect either or both sides of the heart, but most cases involve the left side where the heart cannot pump enough oxygen-rich blood to the rest of the body. The main causes of heart failure include coronary artery disease, ischemia, heart attack, high blood pressure, diabetes, and diseases of the heart valves. Symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Persistent coughing and/or wheezing
- Constant fatigue and difficulty with everyday tasks
- Swelling in the ankles, feet, legs and sometimes the abdomen
- Confusion, impaired thinking, memory loss and disorientation
- Increased heart rate

Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)

CAD is the result of plaque buildup in the coronary artery wall, narrowing or blocking the arteries supplying blood to the heart muscle, decreasing the needed oxygen and nutrients and typically resulting in the development of anginal symptoms.

EECP® Therapy

EECP therapy is a non-invasive, outpatient therapy for the treatment of patients with heart disease. Treatment is typically given in 35 one-hour sessions over seven weeks. Patients lie down on a padded table and their calves and lower and upper thighs are wrapped in blood pressure-like cuffs. The system, which is synchronized to the individual patient's cardiac cycle, inflates the cuffs with air to create external pressure when the heart is resting and deflates the cuffs just before the heart beats. The system's action, which pulses counter to the heart's beating, increases blood flow to the heart muscle and decreases the heart's workload, creating a greater oxygen supply for the heart muscle while lowering the heart's need for oxygen. EECP therapy is currently indicated for use in cases of stable and unstable angina, congestive heart failure, cardiogenic shock, and acute myocardial infarction.

Myocardial Infarction (MI)

Also known as a heart attack, MI is the sudden damage or death of heart muscle as a result of a blocked artery restricting the flow of blood.

Myocardial Ischemia

Occurs when plaque build-up or an obstruction causes the heart arteries to narrow, reducing the flow of oxygen-rich blood to the heart muscle.

Nitroglycerin

Commonly prescribed to control angina symptoms. Nitroglycerin widens blood vessels and is prescribed in both short- and long-acting forms.

Sources: American Heart Association – www.americanheart.org
Your Medical Source – www.yourmedicalsource.com
Legacy Heart Care – www.legacyheartcare.com
Life Heart – www.lifeheart.com