

What is Microvascular angina?



Microvascular Angina happens when the smallest blood vessels in the heart don't work the way they should. This means that blood cannot get to where it needs to be in the heart and this can cause symptoms such as chest pain.

What it feels like to have Microvascular Angina

There are lots of symptoms you might have with Microvascular Angina. Below are just a few of these. Sometimes other less common symptoms can happen too.



Chest pain, pressure or tightness



Short of breath when you've not been exercising or very active



Feeling suddenly dizzy, sick and becoming sweaty

There are some things that can start or trigger a Microvascular Angina episode, and these can sometimes include -



- Stress
 - Feeling stressed, anxious or worried.



- Cold weather
 - A change in weather, cold weather, or breathing in cold air.



- Exercise
 - Being very active or exercise can sometimes set off an episode of Microvascular Angina. This is because the heart needs more oxygen than the micro vessels can supply.



- We don't know why.
 - Sometimes a Microvascular Angina episode can come from nowhere and can even happen when you are just sitting comfortably, resting.

Having these symptoms may make you feel anxious, especially if you have not had them before or if they are different to the symptoms that you usually feel.



- If you have chest pain that is really bad, or worrying, or that does not go away after around 15 minutes (including after using GTN spray if available), you should always get medical advice as quickly as you can.



- This may mean calling for an ambulance or getting someone who is with you to call an ambulance for you.

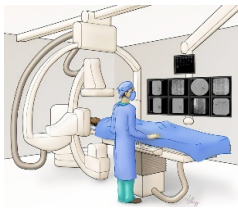
Tests you might have



- At hospital you may be given an ECG (Electrocardiogram) and blood tests. These are needed to see if your heart is working ok. A heart doctor (cardiologist) might want you to go for some tests to see if you have Microvascular Angina. This might include a blood test. It can sometimes be quite hard to test for Microvascular Angina.



- Stress test (Echocardiogram, MRI, PET/nuclear scan or treadmill exercise)
 - Your heart rate is made to go faster in this test. This can be done by you doing some exercise while the test is going, or by having a chemical injected into your arm to make your heartbeat faster. The test will show the doctors what happens to your heart when it works hard.



- Coronary Angiogram
 - This test is usually done to find out if you have any blockages in the blood vessels. A special, tiny wire is put inside a vein and goes to your heart. A special dye is used so that the doctor can see what is going on in your heart. The angiogram may involve other tests too, to see how the blood vessels in your heart are working. This is called a 'Functional Coronary Angiogram'.



- Cardiac MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) or PET (Positron Emission Tomography) Scan
 - These scans are different to an angiogram. You will have a chemical injected into your arm to make your heart work harder. The scan lets the doctor see what is happening to the heart muscle when the heart is made to work harder. The blood flow in the tiny blood vessels can also be looked at.

How is Microvascular Angina Treated?



- There is no medication at the moment that is specially made for Microvascular Angina, but there are lots of medications like ACE inhibitors and statins that are used to help make the symptoms of Microvascular Angina feel a little better. These medicines can help stop the symptoms from happening. Clinical research to find new treatments for Microvascular Angina is happening now.

- Things that can help to try and stop symptoms of Microvascular Angina from happening and can help to keep blood vessels healthy are medicines and changes in lifestyle too.



- Changes in lifestyle can be a good way to help make Microvascular Angina symptoms a little better and can also help stop symptoms from happening.



- Smoking can damage the inside of blood vessels, so stopping smoking is an important thing that you can do.



- Staying at a healthy weight might also help your symptoms.



- Having a healthy diet



- Doing regular exercise



- Having good sleep and keeping stress levels low can also help.



Making healthy choices and doing things that help keep stress levels low can help too. Like yoga, meditation or Tai Chi. These can help angina symptoms to feel a little better and can sometimes help you to feel healthier too!

PLEASE NOTE: Nothing in these summary sheets should be taken in any way as advice or recommendation. All the information contained in these sheets is an opinion only and is shared here only in the hope that it is of interest to other patients and medical professionals. Always talk with your own doctor before trying any new medications or therapies and before changing any of your current routines.