

What is Takotsubo?



Takotsubo happens when the left side of the heart swells and does not work the way it should. This means that blood cannot get to where it needs to be in the heart and in the rest of the body and this can cause symptoms like chest pain. It is difficult to tell the difference between Takotsubo and a heart attack. Most people who have Takotsubo get better quickly. Some people take longer to feel better. Only a small number of people have problems for a very long time, or do not get better.

What it feels like to have a Takotsubo

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



Really bad chest pain, pressure, squeezing or tightness.



Short of breath when you've not been exercising or very active and feeling sick.



Feeling really dizzy without warning, you may faint.

There are some things that can start or trigger Takotsubo and these can sometimes include -



- Stress
 - Sudden stressful things happening like a death of a person who is very special to you happening without warning.



- Pain
 - Really bad pain from an accident, or illness that happens without warning



- A surprise party that really shocks you
 - Sometimes even something really exciting and nice that you weren't expecting may be such a shock that it triggers Takotsubo



- We don't know why.
 - Sometimes a Takotsubo can come from nowhere and no one knows why.

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, 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.

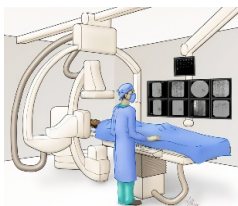
Tests you might have



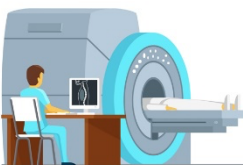
- At hospital you may be given an ECG (Electrocardiogram) and blood tests. These are needed to see if your heart is working ok. A heart doctor (cardiologist) might want you to go for some tests to see if anything is happening to your heart to make you have chest pains.



- Echocardiogram
 - This test uses sound waves to see what your heart looks like and how well it is working.



- 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.



- Cardiac MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) or PET (Positron Emission Tomography) Scan
 - These scans are different to an angiogram. The scan lets the doctor see what the heart looks like and how well it is working.

How is Takotsubo Treated?



- Having a Takotsubo can feel and look like a heart attack. There are lots of medications like ACE inhibitors and beta-blockers that are used to help make your heart feel a little better. There are other medications that can help stop you feeling breathless too.
- If your heart is beating differently than it did before, like missing a beat or doing more beats than it should, then there is a special thing called an ICD that can be put under your skin to help stop this happening.



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



- Making healthy choices like

- Stopping smoking.



- Eating healthy food.



- Staying at a healthy weight.



- Doing regular exercise.



- Having good sleep will help you have a better start to each day.



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

N.B. Nothing in these summary sheets should be considered in any way as advice or recommendation. All 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 consult your own medical practitioner before trying any new medications or therapies and before changing any of your current routines