

What is MINOCA?



MINOCA happens when the heart is damaged. Blood cannot get to the heart and can cause symptoms like chest pain.

MINOCA can happen to younger men and women, but usually it happens more to women.

MINOCA can often happen when you are resting and doing nothing and can come from nowhere. MINOCA can sometimes happen during the early hours of the morning and can wake you from sleep.

What it feels like to have MINOCA

There are lots of symptoms you might have with MINOCA.

Below are just a few of these. Sometimes other symptoms can happen too.



Sudden really bad chest pain, pressure, squeezing or tightness



Short of breath when you've not been exercising or even just sitting still



Feeling suddenly dizzy, sick and becoming sweaty

When the spasm stops, a lot of the time the pain can go away quickly. You might feel tired and bruised for a few days after bad spasms. Heart attacks sometimes happen if the Coronary Artery Spasm happens over a long time. It is very important to let someone know or get medical help if you have these symptoms.

Sometimes symptoms like these can happen and it is not a problem with your heart.

There are some things that can sometimes start or trigger a MINOCA attack, and these can sometimes include –



- Stress
 - Feeling stressed, anxious or worried.



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



- Strong emotions
 - Being really sad, really angry or really happy.



- Alcohol
 - Drinking lots of alcohol for a long time (alcohol abuse) or stopping drinking lots of alcohol (alcohol withdrawal) can sometimes start off a MINOCA attack.



- Sometimes we don't know why
 - MINOCA can come from nowhere and you are 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 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.

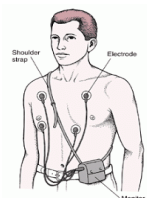


- This may mean calling for an ambulance or getting someone who is with you to call an ambulance for you.

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 Coronary Artery Spasm. This might include a blood test. It can sometimes be quite hard to test for Coronary Artery Spasm.

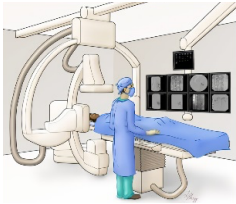


- Ambulatory ECG
 - This means wearing ECG leads for a few days and nights to try and catch a Coronary Artery Spasm happening.



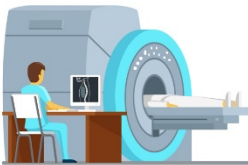
- Stress test (Echocardiogram, MRI, PET/nuclear scan or treadmill exercise)
 - Your heart rate is made to go faster in this test. This can be done by you doing some exercise while the test is going, or by having a chemical injected into your arm to make your heart beat faster. The test will show the 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 arteries in your heart are working. This is called a 'Functional Coronary Angiogram'.

- Cardiac MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging), PET (Positron Emission Tomography) Scan or CT (Computerized 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.

How is MINOCA Treated?

- There are lots of medications used to help stop a MINOCA attack happening again, including statins, calcium channel blockers, beta blockers ACE (Angiotensin Converting Enzyme) inhibitors, aspirin as well as slow and fast acting nitrates. It is important to know that everyone is different and may need different medications.



All these medications could help the blood flow to the heart. Some of the medications lower blood pressure and they all help protect your heart from further harm.

- Things that can help to try and stop MINOCA attacks from happening and can help to keep blood vessels and arteries healthy are medicines and changes in lifestyle too.



- Changes in lifestyle are also a good way to help stop another MINOCA attack from happening.



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



- Staying at a healthy weight might also help.



- Having a healthy diet, cutting back on spicy food and swapping to decaffeinated drinks may help.



- Not having as much or stopping drinking alcohol.



- Doing regular exercise.



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



Making healthy choices and things that help keep stress levels low by doing things like yoga, meditation or Tai Chi, can help as well as help you feel healthier and well too.

PLEASE NOTE: Nothing in these summary sheets should be taken 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 talk with your own doctor before trying any new medications or therapies and before changing any of