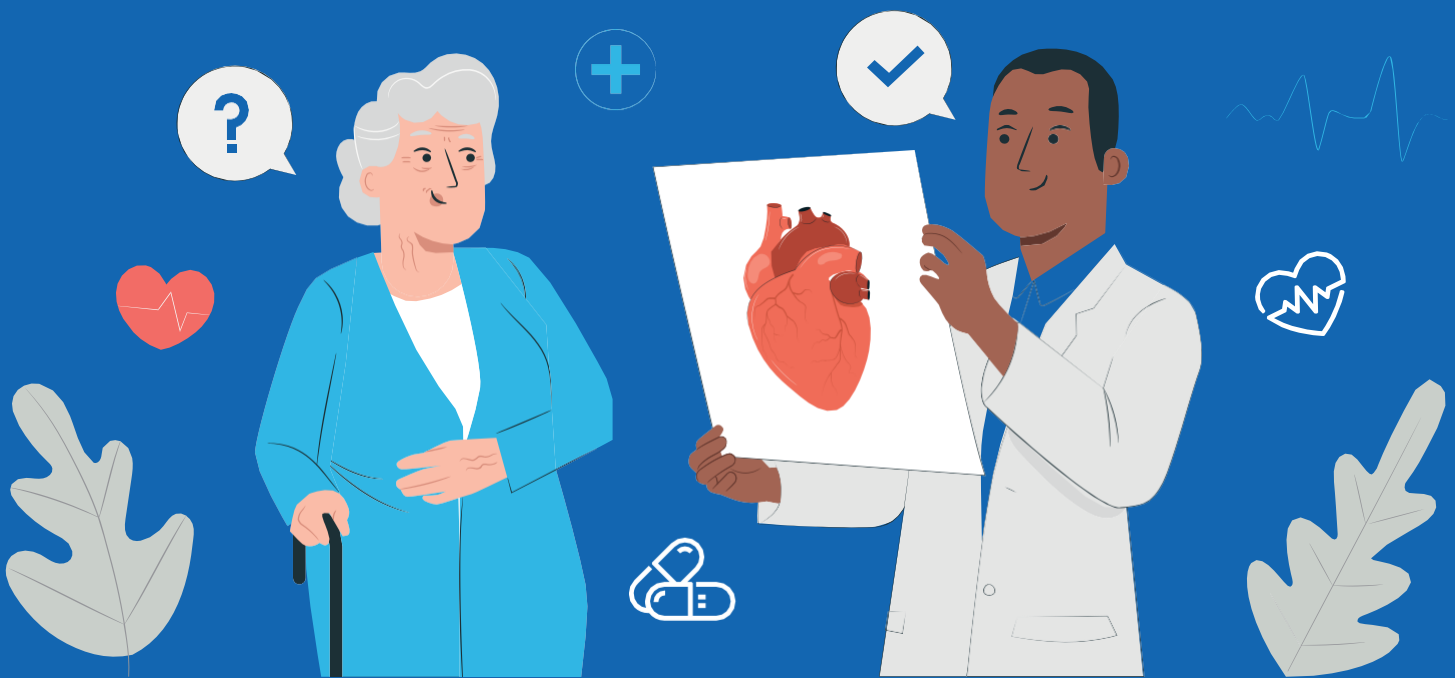


Making a decision about planned treatments for angina



+ Why have I been given this information?

This leaflet is called a decision aid. It will help you choose your treatment for angina. Doctors and nurses will use facts and their experience to advise you about your treatment options. But they also need to know what you think. Your input will help them to make a treatment plan that is right for you.

+ How do I use this information?

Please read through this leaflet and fill in the questions. Take it to your heart appointments.

Word List

Doctors and nurses sometimes use medical words that can be hard to understand. This list below explains some of them.

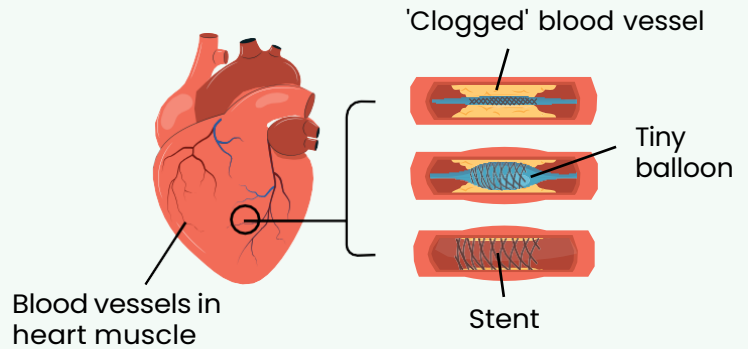
Angina

A feeling of pain, pressure, tightness, discomfort, squeezing, or heaviness in your chest. It happens when part of the heart muscle does not get enough blood.



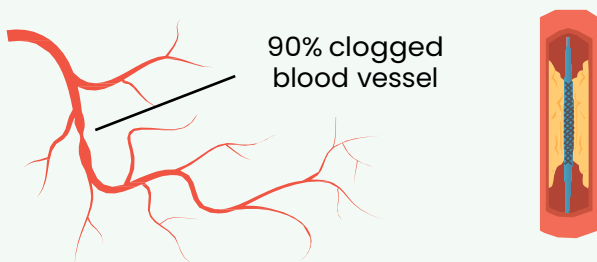
Coronary angioplasty

A common treatment done while you are awake to widen clogged blood vessels in the heart muscle. Stents are often put in as part of this treatment.

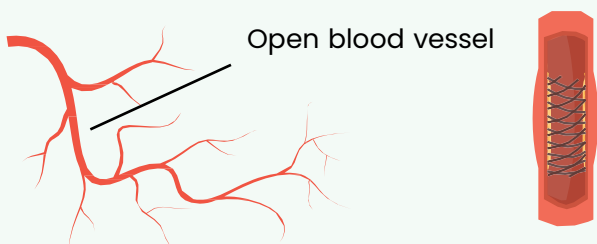


Coronary angiogram

A common test done while you are awake. Doctors inject dye into the blood vessels in the heart so they can take an X-ray of the inside. If they find a blockage, they may carry out a coronary angioplasty right away.



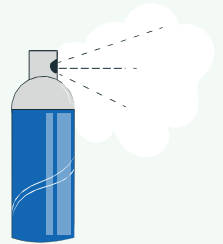
Shows the heart muscle with a clogged blood vessel before treatment.



Shows the widened blood vessel after treatment.

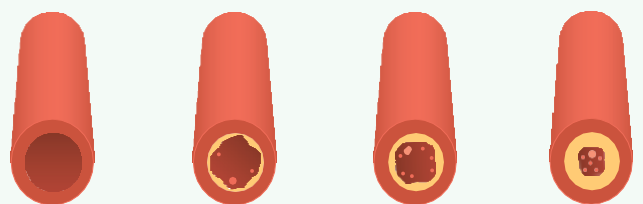
Glyceryl Trinitrate (called GTN for short)

A medication that takes away angina pain. It is taken as a spray, tablet or patch.



Coronary heart disease

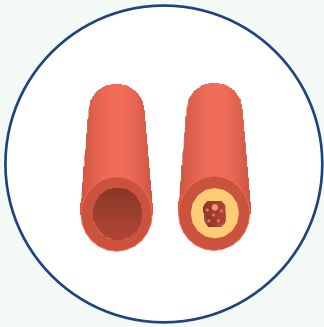
A disease that happens as people get older. The inside of blood vessels that carry blood to the heart can get clogged up. A heart attack can happen when a blood vessel in the heart muscle gets blocked.



Healthy blood vessel

'Clogged' blood vessel

What might be wrong with me?



The heart is a muscle that pumps blood around the body.

Blood flows to the heart muscle through blood vessels.

These blood vessels can narrow or get "clogged."



When the heart works harder, like when walking up a hill, not enough blood can flow to the heart muscle.

This causes chest pain or discomfort. Sometimes, the pain is felt in the jaw, neck, and arms too.



When the pain or discomfort happens regularly and goes away with rest, it is called angina.



If you have chest pain or discomfort:

1. Sit down and rest and use your GTN spray or tablets.
2. Wait 5 minutes.
3. If you are still in pain, take another dose of your GTN spray or tablet.

If the pain or discomfort does not go away after 10 minutes, call 999.

What are my options?



You have been talking to doctors and nurses about tests and treatments for angina. You may already take heart medications. If so, you will stay on these. But if you still get angina pain or discomfort that makes your life difficult, then coronary angioplasty (stents) may help. This leaflet is to help you to decide if coronary angioplasty (stents) is right for you.

Option 1

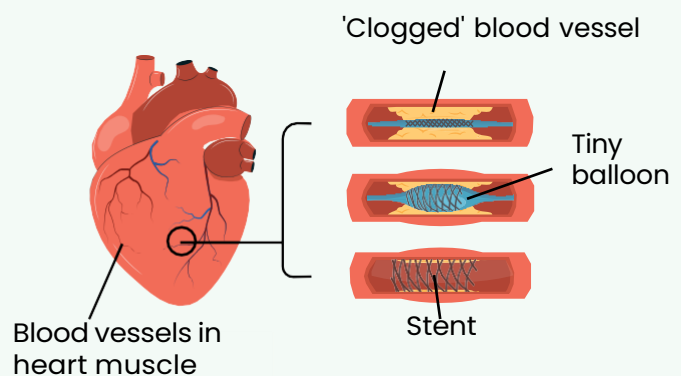
Heart medications



Keep taking heart medications.

Option 2

Heart medications and coronary angioplasty (stents)



Keep taking heart medications **and** have coronary angioplasty (stents).

Option 1: Heart medications

Heart medications protect your heart. They can also take away angina pain and discomfort. This can make your day-to-day life better. The most common heart medications are shown below. Most people will be taking these already. Ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist to write the name of your medications in the spaces below.



ACE is short for Angiotensin Converting Enzyme Inhibitors. They relax your blood vessels and lower your blood pressure.



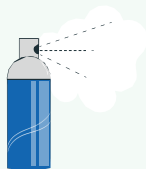
Antiplatelet medications thin your blood and make it less sticky.



Beta-blockers slow how fast and strongly your heart beats. They also relax blood vessels and lower blood pressure.



Calcium channel blockers treat different conditions. They relax blood vessels, lower blood pressure, take away angina and irregular heart rhythms.



GTN spray, tablet, or patch is used to take away angina pain and discomfort. It works by widening blood vessels in the heart.



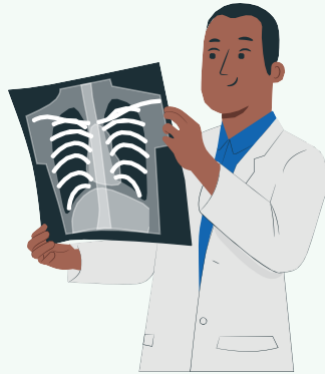
Statins lower blood "fat" levels and stabilize any fatty patches inside your blood vessels. This reduces your chance of a heart attack or stroke.



Option 2: Heart medications and coronary angioplasty (stents)

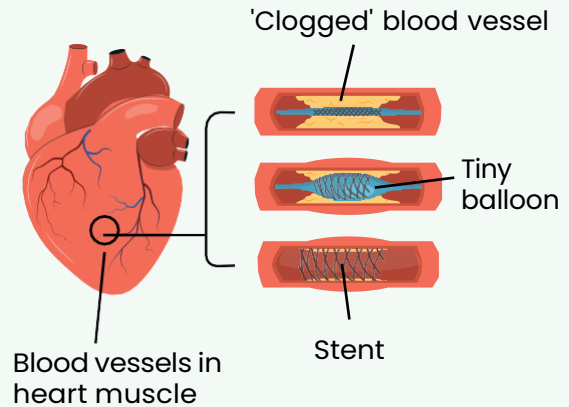
1. Before you go into hospital

Possible tests: blood, X-rays, scans.



There may be some changes to your medications. Talk to your doctor or nurse beforehand.

2. What is coronary angioplasty (stents)?



Coronary angioplasty 'opens' 'clogged' blood vessels using a tiny balloon. A tiny mesh tube, called a stent, holds it open.

3. On the day



The treatment is done in a 'Cath Lab'. You will be awake, and lying still, on a hard bed (for 30 mins to 2 hours).

The skin, (groin or wrist) where the tube is put in will be numbed with an injection.

The tube can be seen on X-ray and is passed up blood vessels into your heart.

4. On the day

Dye is injected into the blood vessels (Angiogram). The doctor can then see any 'clogged' blood vessels.

If needed the blood vessel can be 'opened' and a stent put in (Angioplasty).

Sometimes people get chest discomfort when this happens. This is normal. Let your doctor know. They can give you pain relief.

The stent stays in forever and cannot move. You will still need to take heart medications.

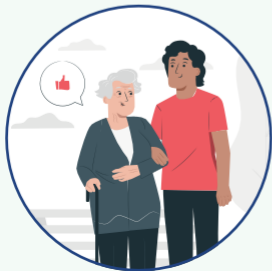
Going home



Usually, people go home on the day they have treatment.



You cannot drive for a week.



You need somebody to take you home.



You will take extra medications to thin the blood, so it flows through the stent. This can mean a delay to future operations.



Take time off for a week and rest.



Your heart team will advise you about looking after yourself at home.

Compare your options

What are the benefits of treatment?

Both treatment options can take away angina pain and discomfort and make your day-to-day life better. The picture below compares how people in one research study felt one year after treatment. It shows that option 2 eased angina for more people than option 1.

But everyone's different. We can't predict how much better you'll feel.

After 1 year

Out of 100 people

42 people
still had
angina

58 people
did not have
angina

**Option 1: Heart
medications**

Out of 100 people

34 people
still had
angina

66 people
did not have
angina

**Option 2: Heart
medications and
coronary angioplasty
(stents)**

Will treatment cure me?

No, coronary heart disease cannot be cured. Both medications and coronary angioplasty can take away angina pain and discomfort. For some people, coronary angioplasty is not the best treatment. Other treatments, such as heart bypass surgery, may be better. You can improve your heart health by living a healthier lifestyle.

What are the possible risks and side effects of treatment?

Both treatments for angina have possible risks and side effects. Your doctor or nurse can tell you about them. We cannot predict if you will, or will not, have a problem as each person is different.

Heart medications

- Heart medications sometimes cause side effects like headaches and dizziness. But these often go away after a few weeks.
- There can be serious side effects like kidney and liver problems. Talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about what to expect. The type of medicine, or dose, may be changed to reduce side effects.

Coronary angioplasty (stents)

- Coronary angioplasty (stents) can sometimes cause problems.
- Bruising at the wrist or groin where the tube was put in often happens.
- Serious problems, like heart attack, death, and stroke can happen but are rare. Ask your doctor or nurse for more details. You will need to keep taking heart medications and an extra medication to thin your blood for 6-12 months.

Keeping your heart healthy

- Get help to quit smoking tobacco.
- Get help to keep a healthy weight.
- Get help to eat a healthy diet.
- Get help to get physically active.
- Take your medicines.
- Get help at a cardiac rehabilitation class.
- Or ring **0808 802 1234** (freephone) British Heart Foundation.



Helping you choose

Please complete the questions below. Your answers will help you and your heart team think about the best treatment for you.

For most people, coronary angioplasty (stents) is done to relieve angina symptoms. So, it is helpful to know how often you get them.

1. During the last month, how often have you had angina pain and discomfort? (Tick one box).

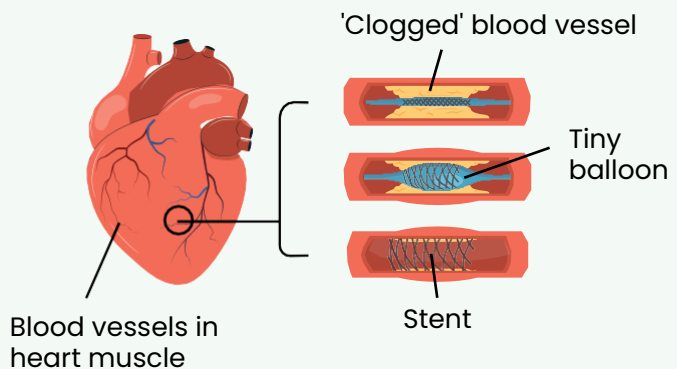
Daily

Monthly

Weekly

None in the past month

2. Which option are you thinking is best for you? (Tick one box).



Heart medications

Heart medications and coronary angioplasty (stents)

3. Do you feel sure about the best choice for you? (Tick one box).

Yes

No

Please write down answers to the questions below.

4. What do you hope this treatment will do for you?

Handwriting practice area for question 4, consisting of six horizontal dashed lines.

5. Do you have any worries about this treatment?

Handwriting practice area for question 5, consisting of six horizontal dashed lines.

6. Do you have any questions to ask your doctor or nurse?

Handwriting practice area for question 6, consisting of six horizontal dashed lines.

ADD HOSPITAL LOGO

Making a decision about planned treatments for angina

You can write some details about your trust in here:

Who should patient call if they feel unsure about their decision? Could be contact details of department, local cardiac rehab etc.



Address details

Add details



Phone number

Add details



Email address

Add details

Development:

March 2025

Disclaimer:

This leaflet gives information to help you discuss your treatment options. It does not replace the medical advice given by your doctor or nurse.

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Freepik, Storyset, Nounproject

The leaflet was informed by research studies: <https://doi.org/10.1186/ISRCTN13802038>
Boden et al. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa070829>