

# Patient information from BMJ

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## Stable angina: what you can do to help yourself

**If you get angina, taking medications is an important part of your treatment, but it's not the only thing you need to do to stay healthy. Your doctor will also talk to you about other steps you should take to improve your health and stop your angina and heart disease from getting worse.**

Here's a list of some things your doctor might suggest.

- Stop smoking. If you smoke, now is the time to stop. The more you smoke, the greater your chance of dying from heart disease. You can talk to your doctor about treatments that can help.
- Try to lose weight if you are obese or overweight. It may help to see a dietitian. Your doctor can also tell you about lifestyle changes, diets, and treatments that can help.
- Eat a healthy diet. You should eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, eat at least one serving of oily fish (such as salmon) every week, and cut back on how much fat and how many sugary foods you eat.
- Exercise regularly. Talk to your doctor about what kind of exercise and how much is safe for you. Many people find it helpful to increase how much they exercise gradually. Some people also choose to incorporate exercise into their day-to-day life - for example, by walking up the last flight of stairs at the office or by getting off the bus one stop early and walking the rest of the way.
- Limit how much alcohol you drink. Doctors usually recommend no more than one drink a day for women with angina and no more than one to two drinks for men. (A drink is 4 ounces of wine, 12 ounces of beer, or 1 ounce of spirits.)
- Learn how to manage stress. Exercising regularly and getting enough sleep can help. You might also consider taking a class in meditation or allowing yourself 15 to 20 minutes each day to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and imagine a peaceful scene. When you're feeling angry, try counting to 10 to give yourself time to calm down. You might ask your doctor for other stress-management suggestions.
- Use a self-help angina plan. If you just found out that you have angina, a self-help angina plan may help you feel better and have less anxiety and depression. These plans often

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involve working through a workbook, with regular support and advice from a nurse. You can ask your doctor about this kind of plan.

- Closely follow your doctor's recommendations on treatments, lifestyle changes, and follow-up appointments. This will give you the best chance of staying healthy.

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