

HEALTH EDUCATION LIBRARY FOR PEOPLE



World's largest FREE health Education library for people..

We help patients to become better patients! We can help you understand your health and medical problems better so you can get better care in partnership with your Doctor.

OUR VISION

We think patients are the largest untapped healthcare resource and that Information therapy is the most Powerful Medicine !

OUR GOALS

1. Encouraging health insurance companies to invest in patient education.
2. Advocating information therapy.
3. Setting up a national network of patient education centers.
4. Developing patient educational materials in Indian Languages for the web.

For more information on this subject:
Ask the Librarian : Free Answers to any Health Questions !!

<http://www.healthlibrary.com/information.htm>

[For More Info: ASK A LIBRARIAN](#)



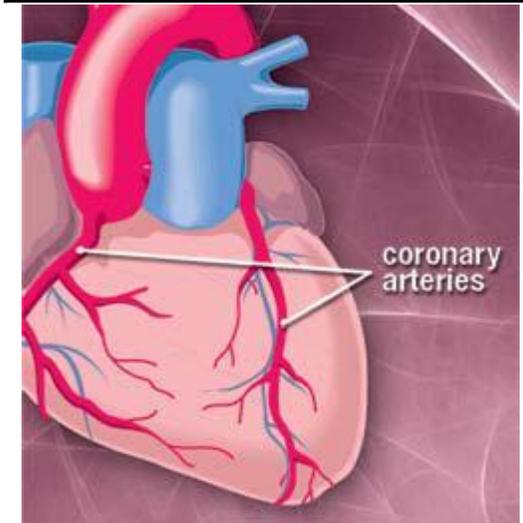
Health Education Library For People

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Coronary Artery Disease

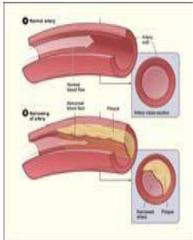


Understanding Coronary Artery Disease

What Is Coronary Artery Disease?

Coronary artery disease (CAD) is a condition in which plaque (plak) builds up inside the coronary arteries. These arteries supply your heart muscle with oxygen-rich blood.

Plaque is made up of fat, cholesterol (ko-LES-ter-ol), calcium, and other substances found in the blood. When plaque builds up in the arteries, the condition is called atherosclerosis (ATH-er-o-skler-O-sis).



Plaque narrows the arteries and reduces blood flow to your heart muscle. It also makes it more likely that blood clots will form in your arteries. Blood clots can partially or completely block blood flow.

When your coronary arteries are narrowed or blocked, oxygen-rich blood can't reach your heart muscle. This can cause angina (an-JI-nuh or AN-juh-nuh) or a heart attack.

Angina is chest pain or discomfort that occurs when not enough oxygen-rich blood is flowing to an area of your heart muscle. Angina may feel like pressure or squeezing in your chest. The pain may also occur in your shoulders, arms, neck, jaw, or back.

A heart attack occurs when blood flow to an area of your heart muscle is completely blocked. This prevents oxygen-rich blood from reaching that area of heart muscle and causes it to die. Without quick treatment, a heart attack can lead to serious problems and even death.

Over time, CAD can weaken the heart muscle and lead to heart failure and arrhythmias (ah-RITH-me-ahs). Heart failure is a condition in which your heart can't pump enough blood throughout your body. Arrhythmias are problems with the speed or rhythm of your heartbeat.

Causes



Coronary artery disease (CAD) starts when certain factors damage the inner layers of the coronary arteries. These factors include: Smoking, High amounts of certain fats and cholesterol in the blood, High blood pressure, High amounts of sugar in the blood due to insulin resistance or diabetes

When damage occurs, your body starts a healing process. Excess fatty tissues

release compounds that promote this process. This healing causes plaque to build up where the arteries are damaged.

Over time, the plaque may crack. Blood cells called platelets (PLATE-lets) clump together to form blood clots where the cracks are. This narrows the arteries more and worsens angina or causes a heart attack.

The buildup of plaque in the coronary arteries may start in childhood. Over time, this buildup can narrow or completely block some of your coronary arteries. This reduces the flow of oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle.

Signs and Symptoms

A common symptom of coronary artery disease (CAD) is angina. Angina is chest pain or discomfort that occurs when your heart muscle doesn't get enough oxygen-rich blood. Another common symptom of CAD is shortness of breath. This symptom happens if CAD causes heart failure. When you have heart failure, your heart can't pump enough blood throughout your body. Fluid builds up in your lungs, making it hard to breathe. The symptoms may get more severe as the buildup of plaque continues to narrow the coronary arteries.

