



Chest pain

The chart lists signs and symptoms of chest pain and what to do.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS	WHAT IT COULD BE	WHAT TO DO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chest pressure, squeezing, burning, tightness, or pain (may spread to the arm, neck, back, tooth, or jaw). It may or may not go away on its own.• Chest discomfort with: Shortness of breath; sweating; nausea; fast or uneven pulse; lightheadedness; fainting.• Chest pain that does not respond to medicine for a person with angina or heart problems.	Heart Attack	Call 911 right away before you do anything else! The 911 operator may recommend taking an aspirin while waiting for help.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severe chest pain with extreme pain felt across the whole upper back that came on within 15 minutes (may follow lifting a heavy object, but can occur for no reason). The pain can spread to the abdomen.• A knife-like sensation from front to back.• Dizziness and fainting.	Dissecting aortic aneurysm. This is a tear in the main artery from the heart.	Call 911 or go to the emergency department of a hospital! Do not take aspirin.
Chest pain that gets worse when taking deep breaths and occurs with any of these conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden shortness of breath and severe problems breathing. Rapid heartbeat.• Cough with bloody sputum.• Sudden onset of chest pain with calf pain.• Long periods of being immobile from bed rest, recent surgery, or prolonged travel.	Blood clot(s) to the lungs.	Call 911 or go to the emergency department of a hospital!
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sudden and sharp chest pain or tightness with breathing.• Increasing shortness of breath.	Collapsed lung. Trauma to the chest is the main cause.	Call 911 or go to the emergency department of a hospital!
Squeezing, pressure, indigestion feeling, or pain (often dull) in the chest. The pain may spread to the arm, neck, jaw, or back. Symptoms come on or are made worse by stress or physical exertion. They ease with rest.	Angina	See doctor.
The pain is on only one side of the chest and is not affected by breathing. A burning feeling and a skin rash are at the site of the pain.	Shingles	See doctor.
Vague pain in the chest (if any). Shortness of breath; chronic fatigue; cough with phlegm or blood; night sweats; appetite and weight loss; and fever.	Tuberculosis (TB). Chronic lung infection with a certain bacteria.	See doctor.
Burning feeling in the chest or just above the stomach that comes and goes before, during, or after eating. It gets worse when you bend over or lie down.	Heartburn or hiatal hernia. {Note: This could also signal a heart attack.}	See doctor.
Chest pain that worsens with deep breaths, coughing, or touching the chest or ribs. May also include shortness of breath and rapid breathing.	Pleurisy. The membrane that surrounds the lungs is inflamed. Muscle strain or rib injury.	See doctor for diagnosis.
Chest pain with fever and coughing up green, yellow, or gray mucus.	Flu, pneumonia, bronchitis, or other upper respiratory infection.	See doctor.
Sudden, sharp pain below the left nipple that lasts less than a minute or so.	Precordial catch syndrome. This harmless, recurrent problem usually occurs in young adults.	See doctor for diagnosis. Try daily stretching exercises to reduce getting these pains.
Pain and tender feeling in the upper part of the chest. The pain gets worse when pressure is applied to the area. It can get worse with deep breaths, too.	Costochondritis. This is inflammation where the ribs attach to the breastbone.	See doctor for diagnosis. Take an OTC medicine for pain and swelling. Apply a heating pad set on low or a hot water bottle to the area of pain.