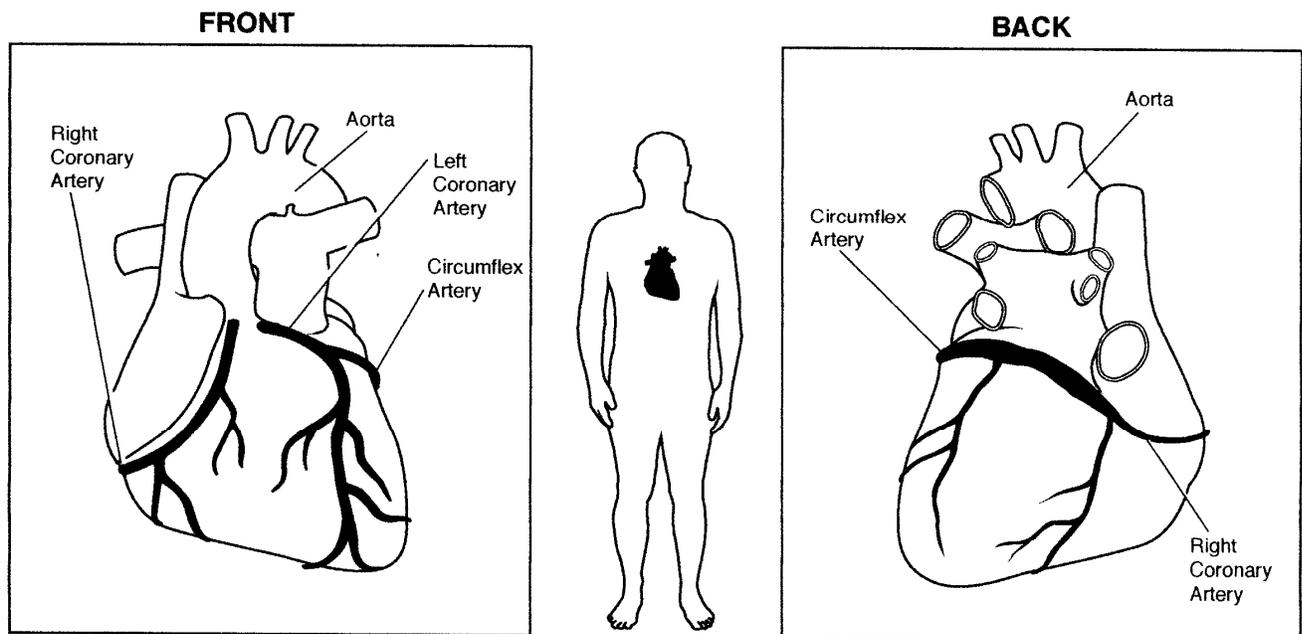


Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)

Coronary artery disease is also called heart disease or atherosclerosis. It is caused by the build up of fatty deposits called plaque in the blood vessels of the heart.

The heart must get oxygen and nutrients to work well. Blood carries the oxygen and nutrients to the heart through the blood vessels called arteries. As the plaque builds up in the blood vessels, blood flow to the heart muscle is decreased. When blood flow is decreased, chest pain, shortness of breath, or other signs may occur. If the blood flow is stopped or blocked, it causes a heart attack.



Signs of Coronary Artery Disease

You may not have any signs or you may have:

- Pain or pressure in your chest, arm, jaw, shoulders or neck also called angina. It may spread from one place to another.
- Feeling of tightness, heaviness, squeezing or burning
- Sweating

- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Feeling very tired, dizzy or faint

Call 911 if you have any of these signs.

Risk Factors

You are at higher risk for getting coronary artery disease if you:

- Have a family history of the disease
- Have high cholesterol, diabetes or high blood pressure
- Smoke or use tobacco
- Are inactive
- Have stress
- Are overweight

Changing even one risk factor can improve your heart health. You can prevent the disease from getting worse and may even help to improve it.

Your Care

If your doctor thinks that you have coronary artery disease, you may have tests such as:

- An **electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG)** to check the electrical activity of your heart.
- A **cardiac magnetic resonance imaging test (MRI)** to take pictures of how well your heart is working.
- A **stress test** to look for problems with your heart's rate, rhythm or electrical activity. Blood pressure and signs such as shortness of breath or angina are also checked.
- An **echocardiogram** to see the size and shape of your heart and how well it is working.

- A **chest x-ray** to check your heart, blood vessels and lungs.
- **Blood tests** to check levels of fats, cholesterol, sugar and proteins in your blood.

If tests show that you are likely to have CAD, other tests or procedures may be done to treat the disease. The goal is to improve blood flow to your heart muscle and decrease your risk of heart attack. Treatment may include:

- Medicines
- Exercise
- A low fat diet
- Procedures or surgery
- A cardiac rehab program

No matter what type of treatment is done, it does not “cure” the disease. You need to change your risk factors and follow your care plan.

Talk to your doctor about your care or any questions you may have.

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