

## ANGINA

### PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

**PATIENT NAME**

**DATE REVIEWED AT THE AMBULATORY EMERGENCY CARE CLINIC**

**NAME OF ADVANCED NURSE PRACTITIONER:**

**At your visit to the ambulatory clinic at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary (DGRI), with an episode of chest pain, a diagnosis of possible Angina was documented.**

### **What is Angina?**

Angina is a pain or discomfort, which can feel like a heaviness or tightness, in your chest due to **Coronary Heart Disease**.

### **Angina Symptoms.**

Angina often feels like a **heaviness or tightness** in your chest, and this may spread to your arms, neck, jaw, back or stomach as well. Some people describe a feeling of severe tightness, while others say it's more of a dull ache. Some people may feel shortness of breath too.

### **What is **Coronary Heart Disease**?**

Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) occurs when the arteries around the heart that supply the heart muscle with oxygen and blood become narrowed due build up of fatty plaques. When the arteries become narrowed the supply of blood and oxygen is restricted to the heart muscle, resulting in symptoms of Angina, such as chest pain.

### **What Causes the Symptoms of Angina?**

Angina symptoms can be brought on by physical activity, emotional stress/upset, and cold weather or after a meal.

### **What are the Risk Factors for Coronary Heart Disease?**

1. Smoking
2. High Cholesterol
3. High Blood Pressure
4. Family History of Coronary Heart Disease  
(Males <55 years, Females <60 years).
5. Overweight
6. Diabetes
7. Ethnic background
8. Lack of Exercise
9. Alcohol excess and poor diet.
10. Being male
11. Getting older.

### **How is Angina diagnosed?**

The clinician or nurse practitioner will be able to diagnose possible Angina from the symptoms you describe. You may require further investigations for your symptoms to clarify the diagnosis of Angina, such as an Exercise Tolerance Test (ETT), Echocardiogram (to look at how the heart is contracting), or a Coronary Angiogram to look at the coronaries arteries for any narrowing or blockages.

### **How is Angina Treated?**

Angina can be managed with medication that helps to control the heart rate and blood pressure, which helps to reduce the workload of the heart and control your angina symptoms.

Medications can include: Beta Blockers (Bisoprolol – to help control the heart rate), Aspirin (to thin the blood), Statin (to reduce build up of plaque), GTN Spray (to help with chest pain), Oral Nitrates (to open up the coronary arteries), ACE Inhibitors (help with blood pressure), and others as needed dependent on your medical situation.

In the event you have a coronary angiogram, you may require a stent or stents to open a narrowing in the coronary arteries or in severe disease may require Coronary Artery Bypass surgery.

To help manage your symptoms of angina, it is important to make lifestyle changes in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle, particularly stopping smoking.

### **Follow up after your visit to the Ambulatory Service.**

After your possible diagnosis of Angina, you will be referred to the Cardiology (Heart) Team for a review and may require further investigations to manage your symptoms.

You may also be referred to the Cardiac Rehabilitation service to join their exercise and educational sessions, to help you understand and maintain a good quality of life, in order to continue with your daily activities of living.

### **What Should I do if I get Chest Pain?**

If you have **not** been diagnosed with angina and experience chest pain greater than 15 minutes, **call 999 immediately**.

If you have already been diagnosed with angina, you may experience angina pain or discomfort, which can be managed by taking your Glyceryl Trinitrate (GTN) spray or tablets, and resting. However, you need to be aware of symptoms that may suggest a heart attack. So if you feel any of the following:

- Crushing pain, heaviness or tightness in your chest.
- Pain in your arm, throat, neck, jaw, back or stomach.
- Or become sweaty, feel light-headed, sick or become short of breath.
- Last more than 15 minutes

You can take these steps:

1. Stop what you are doing and sit down and rest.
2. Take your GTN spray (usually 2 puffs under the tongue) or tablets (sublingually between your gum and lip), in accordance with medical instructions. The chest pain should resolve within a 2-3 minutes – if it doesn't, you can take a further 2 puffs of GTN spray.

3. If the pain does not resolve within 5 minutes after your second dose, **call 999 immediately.**

If you're not allergic to aspirin, take one adult tablet (300mg) or if you have had one 75mg tablet aspirin already that morning, you can take another 3 of these strength tablets if there are no 300mg tablets available. If you don't have any aspirin or you are not sure if you're allergic to aspirin, you should rest until the ambulance arrives.

Even if your symptoms don't match the above but you suspect you're having a heart attack, **call 999 immediately.**

### **Who to Contact.**

**It is important to seek medical help if you are worried about your chest pain symptoms, including:**

- 1. You are having chest pain that is coming and going**
- 2. The chest pain resolves quickly but you are still concerned.**

**For the above symptoms or any other concerns, the advice is to see your GP initially or contact NHS 24 when your GP practice is not open and they will assess your symptoms and decide whether you require any further assessment and treatment.**