



Chest Pain

What is it?

Chest pain can feel like a dull ache, a sharp stab, or a crushing or burning sensation. You can feel chest pain anywhere from your jaw to your ribs. You should take any case of chest pain seriously, as it can be a sign of a heart attack.

What will my GP do now?

Your GP will need to find the cause of your chest pain. They will also test for angina, which is when your heart doesn't get enough blood flow.

Your GP may:

- Arrange a heart health check for you
- Ask you to have several blood tests
- Give you medicine to reduce the risk of a heart attack (this may only be a short-term step until you get the results of your tests)
- Give you advice and resources to manage any heart disease risk factors
- Talk to you about whether you might need to see a cardiologist (a heart health specialist)

What can I do?

The most important step now is for your GP to find the source of your chest pain, so you can be treated. You can help this process by:

- Asking questions, so you know what to do in an emergency
- Booking appointments for any tests as soon as possible
- Taking any medication as instructed
- Making follow-up appointments with your GP

It is important to reduce your heart disease risk factors:

- **Quit smoking** – speak to your GP or phone 13QUIT
- **Exercise regularly** – aim to work movement into every day
- **Take steps to lose weight** – talk to your GP about weight loss management
- **Eat a healthy diet** – include plenty of fresh fruit, vegetables, whole grains and water
- **Reduce alcohol** – drink less than two standard drinks per day
- **Get your blood pressure checked regularly** – your GP can do this for you

Troponin Testing

A troponin test is a blood test that checks for damage to your heart muscle cells. The test measures the levels of troponin T or troponin I proteins in the blood.

These proteins are released into the bloodstream when there is damage to the heart.

If you have a high amount of these proteins in your blood, it could be a sign of a heart attack.

In south western Sydney, troponin testing usually occurs in the hospital



When should I call an ambulance?



Chest pain could be a sign of a heart attack. If you feel pain in the centre of your chest, numbness in your arm, and the pain doesn't go away when you are sitting or resting, call triple zero (000) immediately

Many ambulances are now equipped with ECG machines that can send the results straight to the hospital specialist. Ambulances can also administer medication to prevent a heart attack if needed.

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What supports are available?

Cardiac rehabilitation

Cardiac rehabilitation coordinators at local hospitals can arrange cardiac rehabilitation programs which help you manage and prevent your heart disease risk factors. For coordinator details:

- Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital: Phone 9722 7963
- Bowral and District Hospital: Phone 4861 0290
- Camden and Campbelltown Hospitals: Phone 4654 6228
- Fairfield Hospital: Phone 9616 8153
- Liverpool Hospital: Phone 8738 3080

Budyari Aboriginal Community Health Centre

The Budyari Aboriginal Community Health Centre provides heart health checks, education, an Aboriginal health worker, and an Aboriginal care program. Phone 8781 8020 to learn more. The program is based at 18 Woodward Crescent, Miller NSW 2168.

What questions could I ask my doctor?

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- Am I at risk of a heart attack?*
 - How can we find out the cause of my chest pain?*
 - Do I need to see a cardiologist?*
 - How will I know if I'm having a heart attack?*
 - How can I reduce my risk of heart disease?*
 - What if my chest pain gets worse again?*
 - Who can I talk to if I need more support?*
 - Where can I learn more about chest pain?*

Where can I learn more?

If you want to read more about chest pain and heart health, the following resources can help.

Heart attack resources

- **Heart Attack Facts** – for information about heart attacks facts: heartfoundation.org.au
- **The Heart Foundation** – fact sheets on heart disease: heartfoundation.org.au

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs