

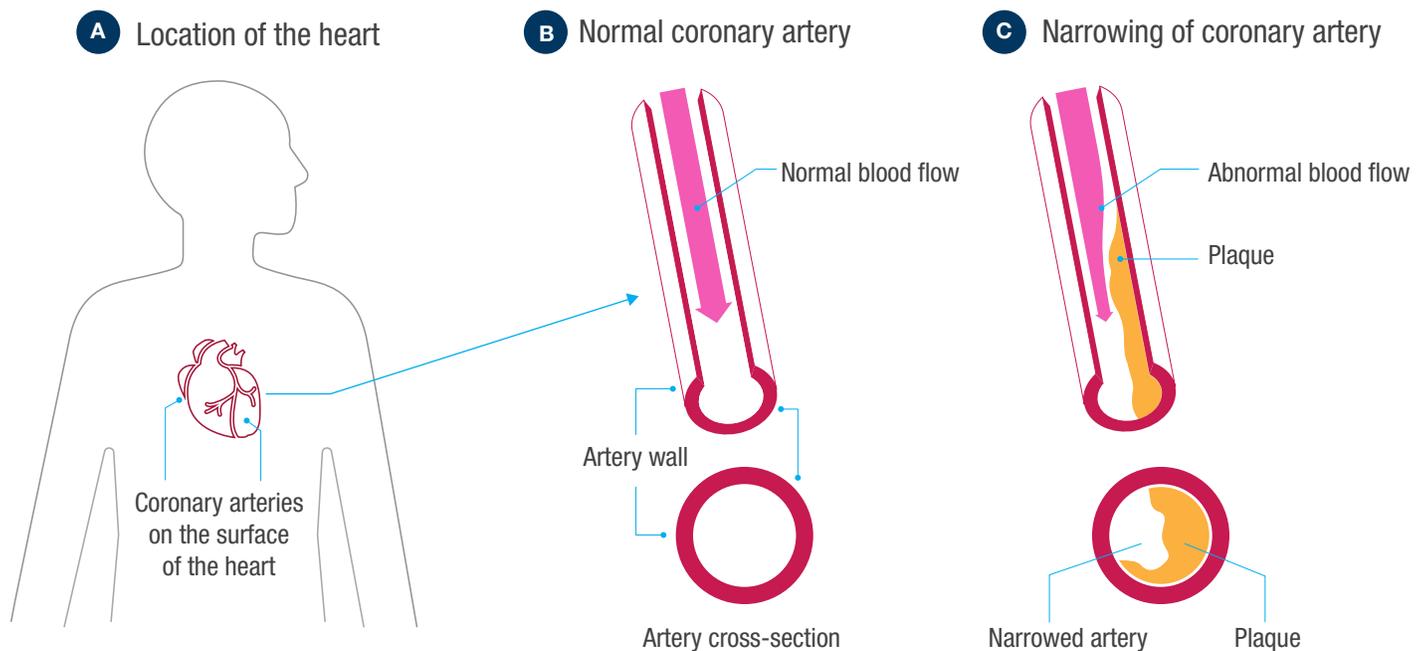


# CHOLESTEROL, CORONARY HEART DISEASE, AND ATHEROSCLEROSIS

**Coronary heart disease (CHD)** is a disease in which a waxy substance called plaque builds up inside the coronary arteries. These arteries supply oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle.

Too much **LDL (bad) cholesterol** can combine with other substances in the blood to contribute to plaque buildup.

When plaque builds up in the arteries, the condition is called **atherosclerosis**. The buildup of plaque occurs over many years.



If the flow of oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle is reduced or blocked, angina or a heart attack can occur.

Angina is chest pain or discomfort. It may feel like pressure or squeezing in your chest. The pain can also occur in your shoulders, arms, neck, jaw, or back. Angina pain may even feel like indigestion.

A heart attack occurs if the flow of oxygen-rich blood to a section of heart muscle is cut off. If blood flow isn't restored quickly, the section of heart muscle begins to die. Without quick treatment, a heart attack can lead to serious health problems or death.

### Conditions that may put you at risk

- Unhealthy blood cholesterol levels
- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Obesity

### Treating coronary heart disease

Treatments for coronary heart disease include heart-healthy lifestyle changes, medicines, medical procedures, and surgery. Treatment goals may include:

- Lowering the risk of blood clots forming (blood clots can cause a heart attack)
- Preventing complications of coronary heart disease
- Reducing risk factors in an effort to slow, stop, or reverse the buildup of plaque
- Relieving symptoms
- Widening or bypassing clogged arteries

**Always talk to your doctor about what is best for you. Ask your doctor before starting any treatments or making changes in your routine or medicine.**

**Source:** National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; National Institutes of Health; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.



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