

What's the difference between angina and a heart attack?

Angina is a warning symptom of heart disease – but it is not a heart attack. The symptoms of a heart attack (also called myocardial infarction or “MI”) are similar to angina.

Angina	Heart Attack
Is brought on by a brief period of poor blood supply to the heart muscle.	Occurs when the blood supply to the heart muscle is blocked for at least 10-20 minutes or so (often due to a clot forming in a partially blocked coronary artery).
Does not cause permanent damage to the heart.	Results in permanent damage to the heart muscle.
Symptoms last just a few minutes and are usually relieved by rest and/or medications. Symptoms include chest pain or discomfort, shortness of breath, palpitations, faster heart rate, dizziness, nausea, extreme weakness and sweating.	Symptoms usually last more than a few minutes and include chest pain or discomfort that lasts for more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back; pain or discomfort in other areas of the upper body; difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; sweating or “cold” sweat; fullness, indigestion or choking feeling; nausea or vomiting; light-headedness; extreme weakness; anxiety; rapid or irregular eartbeats.
Symptoms are relieved by rest and/or medications within a few minutes.	Symptoms are not relieved by rest or oral medications.
Does not require emergency medical attention; however, it is important to call your doctor if this is the first time you've experienced angina, if you have new symptoms or if they become more frequent or severe.	Requires emergency medical attention if symptoms last longer than 5 minutes.