

# Acute coronary syndromes in adults

Information for the public

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[nice.org.uk](http://nice.org.uk)

## About this information

NICE quality standards help to improve key areas of health or social care so that people are offered the best care available.

This information explains the care and support described in NICE quality standard 68 on acute coronary syndromes (including myocardial infarction).

## Acute coronary syndromes (including myocardial infarction)

The quality standard for acute coronary syndromes (including myocardial infarction) is made up of 6 statements that describe high-quality care for adults with acute coronary syndromes (including myocardial infarction). These statements set out the quality of care you should receive.

1. Adults with severe pain in the chest and/or in other areas (for example, the arms, back or jaw) that might be a heart attack (a suspected acute coronary syndrome) are only given a diagnosis of heart attack if their signs and symptoms meet an agreed definition.
2. Adults with heart conditions called NSTEMI and unstable angina have their risk of another heart attack estimated to guide their treatment.
3. Adults with heart conditions called NSTEMI and unstable angina who have a medium or higher risk of another heart attack are offered a test called coronary angiography, and treatment to improve blood flow to the heart if needed, within 72 hours of first being admitted to hospital.

4. Adults with heart conditions called NSTEMI and unstable angina and whose condition is unstable are offered a test called coronary angiography, and treatment to improve blood flow to the heart if needed, as soon as possible but within 24 hours of their condition becoming unstable.

5. Adults who are unconscious after a type of heart attack called STEMI can have a test called coronary angiography, and treatment to improve blood flow to the heart if needed, even though they are unconscious.

6. Adults with a type of heart attack called STEMI whose symptoms started no more than 12 hours before first contacting a healthcare professional are offered a procedure to improve blood flow to the heart (called percutaneous coronary intervention or PCI). They should be able to have this as soon as possible, but within 120 minutes of when they could have received fibrinolysis (a 'clot-busting' drug).

## Your care

Your health and social care team should explain any treatment, care or support you should be offered so that you can decide together what is best for you. NICE has also produced advice and quality standards on [improving the experience of care for adults using the NHS](#) which you might like to read.

We also have more information on the NICE website about [using health and social care services](#).

## More information on acute coronary syndromes (including myocardial infarction)

NICE guidance (advice) on the following topics was used to develop this quality standard:

- [chest pain of recent onset](#). NICE clinical guideline 95 (2010).
- [unstable angina and NSTEMI](#). NICE clinical guideline 94 (2010).
- [myocardial infarction with ST-segment elevation](#). NICE clinical guideline 167 (2013).

## *Sources of advice and support for people with acute coronary syndromes (including myocardial infarction), their families and carers*

- British Heart Foundation, 0300 330 3311  
[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)

- Action Heart, 01384 292233  
[www.actionheart.com](http://www.actionheart.com)
- Atrial Fibrillation Association, 01789 867 502  
[www.afa.org.uk](http://www.afa.org.uk)

You can also go to [NHS Choices](#) for more information about health and social care.

NICE is not responsible for the quality or accuracy of any information or advice provided by these organisations.

A number of organisations who share NICE's commitment to improving quality in this area formally support this quality standard. They may also be able to provide advice and support. For a list of these organisations see the acute coronary syndromes (including myocardial infarction) on the NICE website.

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## *Accreditation*

