

**CARDIAC PAIN  
(ANGINA  
PECTORIS)**

When the coronary arteries are diseased, pain is often experienced even when there has been no thrombosis. It can be merely a feeling of pressure in the chest or it can be a severe pressing or strangling pain under the breast-bone and radiating down the arms. It is brought on by exertion and with rest usually lasts only a few minutes. Anyone who experiences it should see a doctor, who will give him medication that will ordinarily relieve the pain almost at once. The physician will also instruct the patient in how to regulate his life and use medication to prevent or lessen the severity of such attacks.

**OTHER TYPES  
OF HEART  
DISEASE**

The term heart disease covers more than 20 different kinds of conditions. However, the big three — rheumatic heart disease, hypertensive heart disease, coronary artery disease — account for the bulk of disabilities and deaths. Fortunately we now know how to prevent or cure some of the minor types.

**Heart Disease Associated with Infections**

The heart can become involved in practically any infectious disease, but very few cases of heart disease are caused by infections other than rheumatic fever or syphilis. This is true because nowadays so many communicable diseases are prevented by immunization or are treated successfully with serums or drugs before they have a chance to infect or weaken the heart.

Although heart disease resulting from syphilis is completely preventable, it can still occur if the syphilis is untreated. The syphilis germs (*spirochetes*) probably invade the aorta (the large blood vessel leading out of the lower left chamber of the heart) soon after they first enter the body, but actual damage does not show up until years later. If syphilis is detected early in its course, the spirochetes can be destroyed by drugs before they damage the aorta. When syphilis goes unchecked and its destructive work is uncovered years later, treatment can some-

times help relieve symptoms and retard further progress of the disease.

**Congenital Defects**

A very small number of babies are born with defects in the heart or blood vessels (congenital defects). Because of recent advances in surgical techniques, many of these children (including some of the so-called "blue babies") can be restored to normal or near normal life.

**Bacterial Endocarditis**

Bacterial endocarditis, usually caused by bacteria of the streptococcus family, is an infection of the endocardium or heart lining. Formerly usually fatal, it now can often be treated successfully with antibiotics. It occurs most frequently in people who have had rheumatic heart disease or who have congenital heart defects. Doctors give such people antibiotics before any surgical procedures are performed as many cases of bacterial endocarditis occur after operations or deliveries or tooth extractions. The rarer acute form develops when bacteria enter the blood stream during the course of a severe illness, such as meningitis or pneumonia. Thanks to antibiotics, acute bacterial endocarditis is usually cured before it starts, because the underlying infection is treated effectively.

Sometimes the development of heart disease is not accompanied by any symptoms; sometimes the body sends out warning signals that should be heeded immediately. *They may not mean heart disease*, but it is wise to see your physician if you notice any of the following:

**Unusual shortness of breath** — If, say, you suddenly find that you're all out of breath after climbing one flight of stairs, you're right to ask your doctor about it. Shortness of breath associated with moderate exertion can be an early symptom of a weakened heart muscle. It is caused most commonly by the congestion of blood in the lungs which occurs when

**WARNING  
SIGNALS**