

Patient: I had always considered myself to be pretty healthy. It was one day about a year ago; I was going to get the mail and noticed it was easier getting to the mailbox than it was going back to the house. On almost every trip, I noticed a bit of chest tightness and I became a little out of breath. The house is uphill, but it had never really been a problem before.

Several months later, the next time I saw my doctor, I mentioned it and he thought it was a good idea to run a few tests. I hadn't seen him earlier because the symptom hadn't really gotten any worse over time.

[text/VO]: Jim's doctor ordered a stress test, which showed that there were some "changes" when Jim heart rate approached his target. Other tests showed that Jim's cholesterol, especially his LDL level was elevated, as was his blood pressure. He was also noted to be at risk for diabetes because of his family history. His doctor diagnosed him with stable angina, which usually results from a narrowing of the coronary arteries causing the heart to receive an insufficient amount of blood, especially during physical activity..

Patient:

It did come as a bit of a surprise. My first thought was, "Am I going to have to have surgery?" But my doctor said I was probably still at a point where we could manage my condition without surgery. So we talked about making some changes in lifestyle, such as changing the way I eat and getting regular exercise. My doctor also ordered a statin drug to get my LDL cholesterol level down into the ideal range.

[text/VO]: The American College of Cardiology recommends conservative care for people with stable angina, like Jim. Conservative care usually involves managing stress and weight, eating a heart-healthy diet, quitting smoking and exercising regularly. Studies show that in many cases of stable angina, these steps can be as effective as angioplasty, the so-called balloon procedure to clear blocked arteries.

Patient:

So, it's been about a year since all this started. I have routine check ups with the doctor, and he tells me I'm doing very well; my numbers have improved considerably. To say the least, I am very pleased!, The diet and exercise have also helped me shed a few pounds, which is great! I feel better too.

Editor's note: The material in this video portrays a composite of a person's experience with stable angina. It is not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment recommendations and it is not a substitute for your doctor or other health care professional's care. Please consult your doctor/health care professional for advice regarding your situation.