When cholesterol builds up in the arteries that supply blood to the heart — hardening and narrowing the path — it's known as coronary artery disease. The most common symptom is chest discomfort.

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"It lasts a few minutes, or several minutes, and is felt by patients. They describe that discomfort as a pressure."

Chronic discomfort that comes from decreased blood flow is called angina and is typically felt when a person exerts themselves.

If the pain is new or gets worse, seek medical help right away.

Over time, coronary artery disease can weaken the heart muscle and lead to heart failure.

So how can you reduce your risk?

"Eating properly, exercising, having good health habits."

Genetics also can be a risk factor for coronary artery disease.

"It's important to know your cholesterol levels, particularly in individuals that have a strong family history of heart disease. Even though they are healthy, and they are practicing healthy habits, because it can also come in a genetic form."

For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Alex Osiadacz.