

Ischaemic heart disease

Ischaemic heart disease (coronary heart disease) is caused by the reduction of the myocardial (heart muscle) blood flow, by the imbalance between the oxygen level and the body's requirements, but in the majority of cases it is caused by the arteriosclerosis of the coronary arteries (the blood vessels that irrigate the myocardium).

Arteriosclerosis is represented by the diffused or localised thickening of the arterial wall that is caused by an increase in the cholesterol and calcium levels; this determines a variable reduction of the vessel's diameter until it becomes completely, temporarily or definitively obstructed.

Herein under are the **risk factors** for the occurrence of arteriosclerosis and, implicitly, of ischaemic heart disease:

- **Unchangeable:**
 - Age
 - Male gender
 - Family history of arteriosclerotic cardiovascular disease
- **Changeable:**
 - Arterial hypertension
 - Dyslipidaemia (increase in the cholesterol level)
 - Diabetes mellitus or a decrease in the level of tolerance for glucose
 - Smoking
 - Obesity
 - Sedentary life
- **A series of other factors:**
 - An increase in the fibrinogen values, CRP, homocysteine, lipoprotein LP (a), apolipoprotein B
 - Stress, depression

Herein under are the manners in which ischaemic heart disease can manifest itself:

- Stable angina pectoris
- Unstable angina pectoris
- Microvascular angina
- Myocardial infarction
- Painless ischaemic heart disease
 - Cardiac insufficiency caused by an ischaemic heart disease
 - Rhythm/conduction irregularities caused by an ischaemic heart disease
 - Sudden death