

Which medicine should I take to control stable angina?



This is a decision aid to help stable angina patients learn about medication therapies and prepare you for talks with your doctor. This may help you make an informed and value-based choice.

This decision aid is for you, if:

- You have coronary artery disease and stable angina, and are diagnosed with “qi deficiency and blood stasis” traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) pattern by your doctor.
- You want to learn more about the medication therapies your doctor recommends before deciding on one option, or you want to prepare yourself for a shared decision talk with your doctor.



What is coronary artery disease and stable angina?

- Your heart relies on the regular supply of oxygen-rich blood to work properly. A network of coronary arteries and supporting blood vessels carries this nutrient-rich blood to your heart.
- Excess fat in the blood sticks to the blood vessel walls and makes the coronary arteries thicker and stiffer.
- Blood clots may develop, which block blood flow further.
- The lack of nutrient-rich blood flow to the heart causes temporary chest pain called angina. Angina triggered by exercise, cold weather and emotional stress is called stable angina.

You may experience the following signs and symptoms:

The most typical symptom is chest pain or discomfort, accompanied by pain in your shoulder, arms, elbow, jaw or back. Some people feel difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness or fatigue. Symptoms specific to your TCM pattern include a dull red tongue with bruises, a weak pulse and spontaneous sweating.



What are your options?

	Standard treatment with Western medicine (ST)	ST+Qishen Yiqi dripping pills (QSYQ)	ST+Yangxinshi Pills (YXS)	ST+Chinese herbal decoction (CHD)
Composition	<p> Your doctor makes medication recommendations based on your personal condition and complications.</p> <p> Multiple medicines are required if you have more serious angina or multiple risk factors to control or other complications.</p>	<p>Boosts qi and frees the vessels (protects heart muscle and relaxes blood vessels) } Huang Qi</p> <p>They activate blood and relieve pain (inhibit platelet adhesion and increase coronary blood flow) } Dan Shen and San Qi</p> <p>Promotes qi flow and resolves depression; clears stasis and relieves pain (inhibits the forming of blood clots) } Jiang pain and Xiang</p>	<p>They boost qi and nourish the heart; quiet the spirit and stabilize the emotions (protect heart muscle and relax blood vessels) } Huang Qi, Ren Shen, Dang Shen, and Zhi Gan Cao</p> <p>Tonifies and activates blood; nourishes the heart and frees the vessels (increases coronary blood flow) } Dang Gui</p> <p>Boosts qi and quiets the spirit; supports right and secures the root (boosts the immune system) } Ling Zhi</p>	<p> One CHD typically consists of 10 to 30 herbal medicines.</p> <p> Some medicinals treat the primary symptoms such as chest pain whereas others target secondary symptoms like sweating. Some are added to cancel out toxicity or side-effects of the main ingredients, and some may act as catalysts.</p> <p> They work together to boost qi and activate blood, and finally restore balance in the body.</p> <p> It is very flexible. Your formula changes every one or two weeks according to changing signs and symptoms and your response.</p>
Indication	<p> Indications and contraindications are clear and evidence-based.</p> <p>Your doctor will treat according to your risk factors and responses to the previous</p>	<p>For angina due to qi deficiency and blood stasis.</p> <p>A good fit for senior patients, and those with high risks of bleeding or other contraindications for oral aspirin.</p> <p>Good for long-term use.</p>	<p>For angina due to qi deficiency and blood stasis.</p> <p>YXS also nourishes the heart and quiets the spirit.</p> <p>A good fit for those experiencing fatigue, feebleness, insomnia and anxiety.</p>	<p>CHD reduces ST dosage while keeping angina under control. It is a complementary and alternative medicine for those tolerant or resistant to ST, and for those having contraindications for ST.</p> <p>CHD targets multiple diseases with one shot, and is especially good at improving clinical symptoms.</p> <p>It typically improves appetite, sleep, digestion and bladder functioning.</p>
Convenience	<p> Multiple medicines could be taken at the same time.</p>	<p> Needs to be taken separately at intervals of 20 minutes or more.</p>	<p> Needs to be taken separately at intervals of 20 minutes or more.</p>	<p> Preparing the decoction takes 10 minutes (with instant herbal concentrate granules) to 50 minutes (with crude herbal slices) per day. Needs to be taken separately at intervals of 20 minutes or more.</p>
Cost	<p> X RMB/week</p>	<p> X+77 RMB/week</p>	<p> X+74 RMB/week</p>	<p> X+ around 385 RMB/week</p>

Now, you have four options to choose from, i.e., ST alone or ST with QSYQ or ST with YXS or ST with CHD. Working through the 4 steps of this decision aid may help you decide.

Step 1: What are the benefits and risks?

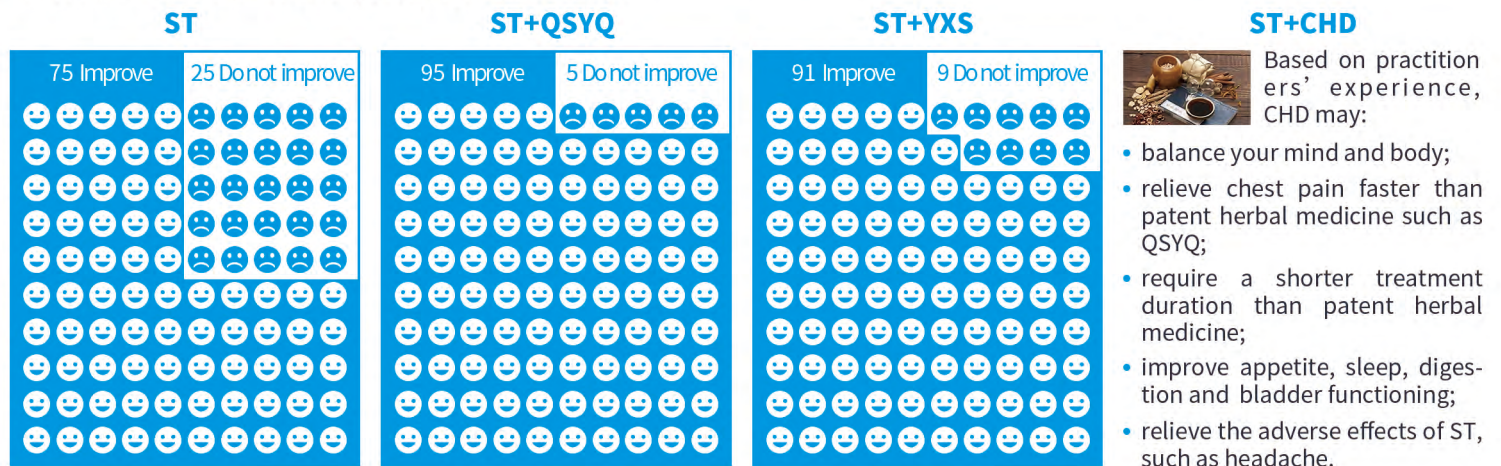


Based on findings from a network meta analysis and clinical trials, the following blocks of 100 faces show a “best estimate” of what happens to 100 people who choose different options for at least one month for improving angina symptoms, and for one year for preventing major adverse cardiac events. Each face (😊) stands for one person. The shaded areas show the number of people who improve or are not harmed. There is no way of knowing in advance if you will be the one who improves or is harmed. ST is defined as a symptomatic treatment for controlling the risk factors of coronary heart disease and anti-angina drugs such as nitrates for rescue use.

1) Short-term benefit [++]

[Relieving chest pain]

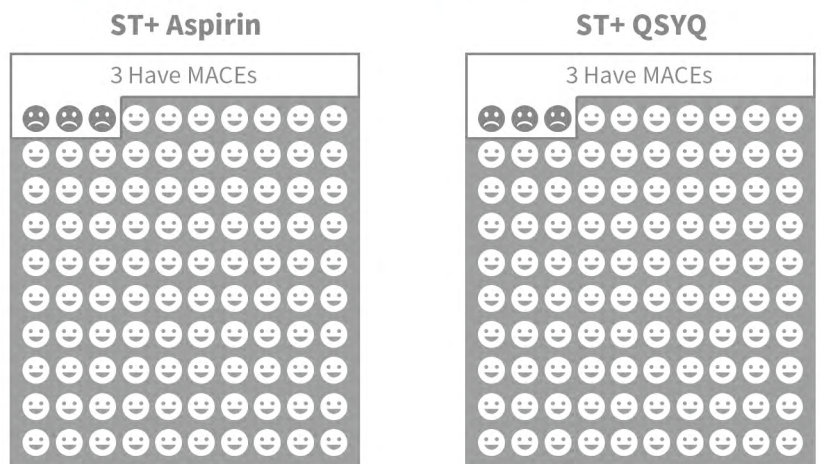
- Chest pain relief is identified if people had a 30% and above reduction in the intensity, frequency and duration of chest pain after at least 1 months’ treatment.
- 20 more people who took ST and QSYQ had chest pain relief compared with people who took ST alone.
- 16 more people who took ST and YXS had chest pain relief compared with people who took ST alone.
- 4 more people who took ST and QSYQ had chest pain relief compared with people who took ST and YXS.
- Chinese herbal decoction is a holistic and versatile therapy for chest pain symptom control. Your TCM doctor may recommend it first. But its benefits have not been well proven in clinical research.



2) Long-term benefit [+++]

[Preventing major adverse cardiac events (MACEs)]

- QSYQ can also be used as an anti-platelet cohesion drug and is comparable to aspirin.
- 3 people who took aspirin or QSYQ for one year for secondary prevention of myocardial infarction had nonfatal heart attack, stroke or died of heart diseases in the 18 month’ s followup.



3) Side effects[+++]

<p>ST</p> <p>ST to manage angina often cause transient cardiac and/or noncardiac side effects. These are often dose-dependent.</p> <p>Drug intolerance, resistance, and contraindications also limits its use.</p>	<p>ST+QSYQ</p> <p>A multi-center large sample randomized controlled trial found 37 of 1000 people who took QSYQ had side effects.</p> <p>Among them, 1 had bleeding, 6 had allergic reactions, 21 had stomachache and 8 had acid reflux.</p>	<p>ST+ YXS</p> <p>A post-marketing safety evaluation identified 1 of 1000 people who took YXS had adverse effects.</p> <p>Among them, 7 of 10,000 had dry mouth and 3 of 10,000 had palpitation (feeling of heart fluttering or pounding).</p>	<p>ST+ YXS</p> <p>CHD reduces ST dosage while keeping angina under control. It also eases the side effects caused by ST.</p> <p>Common complaints of CHD include stomach discomfort, nausea, and diarrhea.</p>
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Note: The options include “estimates” of what happens to groups of people based on the available research. The quality of these estimates is summarized using the GRADE system as follows:

- ++++ High quality –further research is very unlikely to change the estimate.
- +++ Moderate quality –further research may change the estimate.
- ++ Low quality –further research is likely to change the estimate.

- +++ Moderate quality –further research may change the estimate.
- + Very low quality –further research is very likely to change the estimate.

Step 2: Which reasons to choose an option matter most to you ?



Common reasons to choose each option are listed below.

Show how much each reason matters to you by underlining from 1 to 6 stars.

“1 star” means it is not important to you. “6 stars” means it is very important to you.

For ST, how important is it to you...

Not important Very important

- To get faster symptom relief ?
- To take smaller doses of medicine and medicine dosage forms that are convenient for taking and carrying around ?
- To have to take extra medications if you have other discomforts or symptoms that bother you ?
- List other reasons and importance



For ST + QSYQ, how important is it to you...

Not important Very important

- To have the best chance of chest pain relief ?
- To relieve chest pain while preventing MACEs when taken for one year or longer, because QSYQ is comparable to aspirin in inhibiting platelet cohesion ?
- To have minor chances of bleeding, having allergic reaction, stomachache or acid reflux ?
- List other reasons and importance



For ST +YXS, how important is it to you...

Not important Very important

- To have moderate chest pain relief but less chance of having adverse effects compared with QSYQ?
- To quiet your mind and relieve insomnia, fatigue and anxiety while controlling chest pain?
- To have minor chances of having dry mouth or palpitation?
- List other reasons and importance



For ST + CHD, how important is it to you...

Not important Very important

- To have medications whose efficacy depends heavily on your doctor’s expertise?
- To take bad tasting herbal decoction that takes 10 to 50 minutes daily to prepare?
- To solve many of your other symptoms (especially appetite, sleep and digestion) and have your doctor timely adjust the formula according to your current status for optimal efficacy ?
- List other reasons and importance



Now, think about which option has the reasons that are most important to you.

Step 3: You may want to learn about the stories of people having the same health problem as you.



These stories are based on information gathered from angina patients. Their experiences with a certain therapy may be helpful, but the same medicine may not work for you. Please consult your doctor before deciding on a treatment option.



Male, age 61, angina, diabetes and hypertension

I take many pills a day, aspirin, two medicines for diabetes and one for hypertension. I take nitroglycerin when I feel particularly tired, chest tightness or even squeezing pain. My chest pain relieves fast but I have dizziness, light headedness and flushing shortly afterwards. Because I have to take several medicines every day, I prefer western medicine. They are potent and act fast. The dosage is small. It is convenient to take and carry around. It is very important, so that you don't have to swallow a bunch of pills. I have tried Chinese herbal decoction. It has bad tastes and smells, and I can't afford the time to prepare it everyday.



Female, age 61, angina

I took QSYQ and Suxiao Jiuxin pills for quite a while in the past. QSYQ is good for relieving my angina symptoms and it is like a maintenance therapy. In the case of an urgent chest squeezing during heavy work load, I took Suxiao Jiuxin pills for rescue use. I feel good when I stick to this regimen. But the symptoms come back when I stop taking them. Once I had a TCM doctor prescribe herbal decoction for me. Surprisingly, it improved my chest pain as well as sleep and anxiety. I kept taking herbal decoction for half a year. It worked better than patent herbal medicine for me, although I have to swallow two bowls of bitter soup everyday.



Female, age 56, angina and hyperlipidemia

I have a weak constitution and bad sleep. I have chest pain after exerting myself or getting excited. I take medicine daily to control blood fat, and will take YXS for a while when I am not feeling well. There is an improvement in my symptoms of poor sleep, anxiety and fatigue using the YXS treatment.



Female, age 66, angina and hyperlipidemia

I had coronary artery diseases for 10 years, but didn't start taking medicine regularly until 5 years ago when my condition worsened. The lesson I learned is it is always better to get treated early. I have been on standard western medication for angina, including lowering blood fat and preventing platelet cohesion. Since then, I need to take a blood test twice a month. In the meantime, I take Chinese herbal decoction from time to time to relieve the side effects of western medicine (drowsiness and loss of appetite) and maintain general well-being. I think this has improved my energy and physical health.

Step 4: Now, what is your choice? Please cross one option.

- I have decided to choose(_____).
- I can not decide yet. I need to consult my doctor or talk to my family.

This information is not intended to replace the advice of a health care provider.

Version 1.1, updated Jan 9th, 2019, last reviewed Dec 20th, 2019, updated very 4 years. Authors: Wei Mu, PhD, Peng Tian, MA, Shufei Fu, MD, Jie Li, MA and Ying He, MA. Scientific reviewers: Baohe Wang, MD and Tao Wang, MD. Correspondence: muweisonia@foxmail.com. Fund: Natural Science Foundation of China (81603495). The authors declare they have no conflicts of interests. Template by Ottawa Personal Decision Guide © 2000, designed by Annette O' Connor and Dawn Stacey. Data used in the PtDA is based on the following references. For efficacy: 1.D Zhong. Clinical Observation of Qishen Yiqi Dripping Pills for Stable Angina Pectoris Due to Coronary Heart Diseases. Shezhi 2011; 23(3): 265-267. 2.CP Zhao, et al. Clinical Research of Qishen Yiqi Dripping Pills for Coronary Heart Diseases in the Elderly. Acta Chinese Medicine and Pharmacology 2012; 40(4): 113-114. 3.XM Zhao. Clinical Observation of YangXinShi Tablets Combined with Isosorbide Mononitrate Sustained-release Tablets for Angina Pectoris Due to Coronary Heart Diseases. Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine on Cardio-/Cerebrovascular Disease 2017; 15(2): 211-213. 4.Y Chen. Clinical Case-control Observation of YangXinShi Tablets in the Treatment of Coronary Heart Diseases. Global Traditional Chinese Medicine 2015; 8(S1): 51-52. 5.GL Shao, et al. Clinical Research of YangXinShi Tablets in the Treatment of Angina Pectoris Due to Coronary Heart Diseases. Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine on Cardio-/Cerebrovascular Disease 2012; 10(6): 634-644. 6.HY Wang, et al. Clinical Observation of YangXinShi Tablets in the Treatment of Stable Coronary Heart Diseases. Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine on Cardio-/Cerebrovascular Disease 2017; 15(24): 3093-3096. 7.HY Li, et al. Clinical Observation of YangXinShi in the Treatment of Coronary Heart Disease Complicated with Diabetes. World Chinese Medicine 2016; 11(12): 2707-2710. 8.Q Zhang et al. Clinical Study of Huangqi Danshen Dripping Pills for Angina Pectoris Due to Coronary Heart Diseases. Traditional Chinese Drug Research and Clinical Pharmacology 2005; 16(4): 288-290. 9.YF Li. Clinical Observation of Huangqi Danshen Dripping Pills in the Treatment of Angina Pectoris Due to Coronary Heart Diseases of Qi-deficiency and Blood-stasis Syndrome[D]. Beijing: Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, 2000:1-79. 10.DX Xie, et al. Clinical Observation of Qishen Yiqi Dripping Pills on Secondary Prevention of Coronary Heart Diseases. Chinese Journal of Information on Traditional Chinese Medicine 2008; 15(8): 81-83. For side effects: 11.HL Wu, et al. A Multi-center Clinical Trial: Post-marketing Drug Evaluation of YangXinShi Tablets. Drug Evaluation Research 2016; 39(6): 1061-1065. 12.HC Shang, et al. Qishen Yiqi Dripping Pills for the Second Prevention of Myocardial Infarction: a Randomised Clinical Trial. Evidence-based Complementary and Alternative Medicine 2013; article 738391.

Patient Diary Card



Feel free to make notes and record concerns during your decision-making on this page. You may discuss them with your doctor on your next visit.

1. What else do you want to learn about coronary artery disease and stable angina?

2. What else do you want to learn about the characteristics, benefits and risks of the different medication therapies?

3. What other considerations do you have on mind regarding the four options, which are not mentioned in Step 2?

4. Record any concern or feeling that comes to you.

5. Share your personal story with us if you wish.