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“Chest Pain in Hot Weather” — Prinzmetal’s Angina?

This recent title on WomenHeart’s online support community, caught our eye as the temperatures across much of the United States soared into the 90s and 100s. Hot weather can be pretty tough on anyone and especially on women with heart disease, who may be dealing with hormonal fluctuations which also make it difficult to tolerate the heat. But this Heart Sister, a 40-year-old mother of two, was clearly frustrated by what she described as a feeling for nearly ten years that there is something wrong with her heart. It began with an irregular heart beat and has manifested itself more recently in spasmodic chest pain that is evident during hot weather. Cardiologists have not found a problem, so she went online to ask if anyone else had similar symptoms.

The first respondent directed her to look up **Prinzmetal’s Angina** (http://www.hearthealthywomen.org/index.php?view=article&id=74&Itemid=1&option=com_content), irregular heart spasms which may not occur in a predictable pattern, saying *“You will find a lot of discussions on this supposedly rare condition and how so many of us have struggled to get diagnosed and treated. There are some of us with these spasms that don’t fit the general description. In my case, I can have spasms any time of day or night, no matter my activity level or lack thereof. A lot of articles say true Prinzmetal’s only occurs at certain times of the day. That is not always the case. I mention this because Prinzmetal’s has triggers for almost everyone. Extreme temps is a big one. The extreme heat or extreme cold cause my spasms to go into overdrive. It is just something you might want to look up.”*

One of the beauties of WomenHeart’s online support community is that it allows women to reach out to others across the miles when they don’t know where to find answers, or even what questions to ask. Prinzmetal’s may not be the answer for our Heart Sister, but it does give her another topic for discussion with her health care provider and may eventually set her on the path toward good heart health.