

Heart Attack

An Action Plan for Women

Heart disease is our nation's number one killer. Getting treatment quickly –at the first sign of distress –is critical for life-saving medicines and treatments to work. Newer blood tests are being used to diagnose a heart attack more quickly and accurately

There are approximately 500,000 heart attack deaths each year. At least 250,000 people die before they even get to the hospital. Many of these deaths could be prevented by acting quickly and by getting immediate treatment, especially within the first hour of having chest pain. Women account for nearly half of all heart attack deaths. Between the ages of 40 and 60, as many women die of heart disease as breast cancer. Over a lifetime, heart disease kills *five times* as many women as breast cancer. Heart disease is our nation's number one killer.* *Are you at risk?* Listed below are risk factors for heart disease. Check the risk factors that apply to you:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Family History | <input type="checkbox"/> 65+ Years of Age | <input type="checkbox"/> Smoking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> High Blood Pressure | <input type="checkbox"/> Abnormal Level of Cholesterol and Triglycerides |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Abnormal Heartbeat | <input type="checkbox"/> Overweight | <input type="checkbox"/> Birth Control Pills (<i>in combination with smoking</i>) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Inactivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Premature Menopause | |

The Warning... A heart attack may cause some or all of these symptoms:



- Pressure, fullness, discomfort or squeezing in the center of the chest
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Stabbing chest pain
- Pain that radiates to the shoulders, back, neck, arm(s) or jaw
- Pounding heart beats (palpitations) or feeling extra heartbeats
- Breaking out in a sweat for no other apparent reason
- Nausea, vomiting or severe indigestion
- Dizziness with weakness
- Suddenly being overcome with extreme fatigue
- Sensation of panic and feeling of impending doom

NOTE: Some women experience sudden onset of severe weakness with flu-like symptoms and have no chest pain at all when having a heart attack. Others have just one or two symptoms listed above. If you have symptoms you're unsure of, call your healthcare professional without delay. Only by having testing beyond the standard electrocardiogram can a correct diagnosis be made.

If You Suspect A Heart Attack, Call 9-1-1

Chew an uncoated aspirin, call 9-1-1 and say "I am having a heart attack." The ambulance will transport you to the nearest medical facility with 24-hour emergency cardiac care. Getting treatment quickly could save your heart muscle from permanent damage. Clot buster medicine works best if given at the first sign of distress, so DON'T WAIT and don't drive yourself to the hospital. Get to the emergency room without delay. Every minute counts!

In the Hospital Emergency Room...

The doctor will order an electrocardiogram (EKG) and blood work to see if you have had a heart attack. Even if your EKG is normal, more testing is necessary. A number of new tests make it possible to diagnose a heart attack more quickly and more accurately than ever before. Emergency room doctors have been trained to diagnose heart attacks quickly and to start treatments rapidly to prevent damage to your heart. **The emergency room doctor may feel that you are not in any danger and that you may go home, but if you are not comfortable with this decision, ask for an opinion from a cardiologist before being released and insist on being admitted into the hospital overnight for observation.** Be clear, objective and persistent. Insist on the best care for your heart!

*Source: The American Heart Association

HEALTHY HEARTS PROGRAM
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