



# HEART ATTACK – WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Heart attacks are one of the leading causes of death today. They can occur anytime, but often happen while an individual is engaged in physical exertion.

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense. There is no doubt what is happening. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Pain spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms. The pain may be mild to intense and feel like pressure, tightness, burning or a heavy weight. It may be located in the chest, upper abdomen, neck, jaw or inside the arms or shoulders.
- Shortness of breath. Shortness of breath may occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other Signs:
  - Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating and/or nausea
  - Anxiety, nervousness and/or cold, sweaty skin
  - Paleness or pallor
  - Increased or irregular heart rate
  - Feeling of impending doom

Not all of these signs occur in every heart attack. Sometimes they go away and return. If you or someone you know is having symptoms of a heart attack, call 911. Calling 911 is almost always the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services (EMS) staff can begin treatment when they arrive - up to an hour sooner than if someone gets to the hospital by car. EMS staff are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital, too.

Remember these signs. Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, you should still have it checked out. Fast action can save lives, maybe your own.

[Download the recording form here.](#)