



Act in Time to
Heart Attack Signs

Objectives

By the end of this session you will be better informed about:

- How the heart functions
- What a heart attack is
- Heart attack warning signs
- The importance of rapid treatment for a heart attack
- What to do if warning signs happen
- How to reduce your risk of heart disease





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Heart Disease: Major Problem in the United States

- Heart disease #1 killer
- Coronary heart disease
 - Major form
 - Affects about 12 million Americans
- Heart attack
 - 1.1 million affected each year
 - 460,000 deaths
 - Half occur before reaching hospital



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How Your Heart Functions

- The heart pumps blood throughout the body.
- Blood carries oxygen and nutrients.
- Coronary arteries carry oxygenated blood to the heart muscle.





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What Is a Heart Attack?

- Blood flow through one of the coronary arteries becomes blocked.
- Heart disease, which can lead to a heart attack, develops over time as fatty deposits narrow coronary arteries, restricting blood flow to the heart.



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How Does a Heart Attack Happen?

- Coronary artery becomes blocked—usually by a clot.
- Blood flow is closed off and a heart attack begins.
- If blockage continues, parts of the heart muscle start to die.
- Heart may stop beating.



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What Stops a Heart Attack?

- Quick action and medical treatment restore blood flow and save heart muscle.
- Dead heart muscle cannot be restored.





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Importance of Rapid Treatment

- “Clot-busting” drugs break up clots, restoring blood flow.
- Angioplasty opens artery, restoring blood flow.
 - Balloon
 - Stent



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Importance of Rapid Treatment

- Ideally, treatments should be given within 1 hour after symptoms start.
- The more heart muscle that is saved, the better the chance of survival.





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Heart Attack Warning Signs

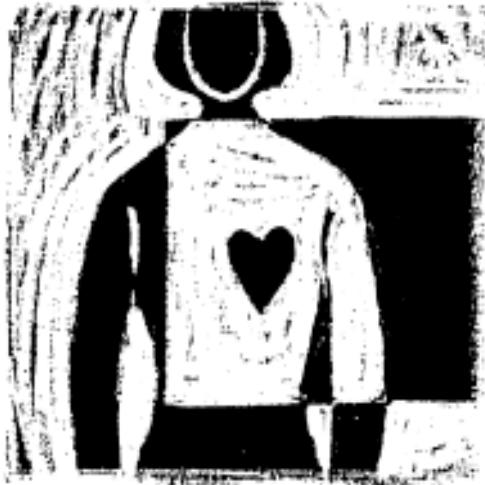
- Chest discomfort—pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain in center of chest
- Discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Shortness of breath, may come before or with chest discomfort
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Nausea
- Light-headedness



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What People *Expect* a Heart Attack to be Like

- Crushing chest pain
- Sudden, intense, falls to the floor—like in the movies





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What Is a Heart Attack Really Like?

- Heart attacks often begin with vague symptoms that slowly intensify.
- Pain or discomfort can be relatively mild.
- Symptoms may come and go.
- Variety of symptoms may signal danger.



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Reaction to a Heart Attack

- May not be sure it is a heart attack
- May confuse with symptoms of other diseases or conditions
- May not want to believe risk
- May ignore symptoms or take a wait-and-see approach



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Delay Can Be Deadly

- Patient delay is the biggest cause of not getting care fast.
- Do not wait more than a few minutes—5 at the most—to call 9-1-1.

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Why People Delay

- Think symptoms are due to something else
- Afraid or unwilling to admit symptoms are serious
- Embarrassed about:
 - “Causing a scene”
 - Having a false alarm
- Do not understand need for getting to hospital fast



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Why People Do Not Call 9-1-1

- Think symptoms are not bad enough
- Unaware of benefits of using 9-1-1
- Think transporting self is faster
- Concern about embarrassment





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Heart Attacks in Women

- Women are as vulnerable as men.
- Half of all heart attack deaths are in women.
- Tend to delay longer than men in seeking help.





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Heart Attacks in Women

- Like men, may feel pain or discomfort
- Somewhat more likely to experience:
 - Shortness of breath
 - Nausea/vomiting
 - Back or jaw pain
- Tend to delay telling others about symptoms to avoid causing bother or worry



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Advantages of Calling 9-1-1

Brings emergency personnel who can—

- Arrive fast and start medical care
- Send information to hospital emergency department before the patient's arrival
- Restart or shock the heart if patient goes into cardiac arrest

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Seven Steps to Survival

1. Learn heart attack warning signs.
2. Think through your steps if warning signs occur.
3. Talk with family and friends about warning signs and calling 9-1-1.
4. Talk to your doctor about heart attack risk.





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Seven Steps to Survival

5. Talk to doctor about what to do if warning signs occur.
6. Gather important information to take to hospital.
7. Call insurance plan to check on coverage.





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Controllable Risk Factors

- Cigarette smoking
- Diabetes
- High blood cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Overweight/obesity
- Physical inactivity



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Non-Controllable Risk Factors

- Age
- Family history of early heart disease
- Previous heart attack or other signs of heart disease