



womenshealth.gov
 1-800-994-9662
 TDD: 1-888-220-5446

Symptoms of Serious Health Conditions

PRINT-AND-GO GUIDE

The following symptoms could be signs of serious health conditions and should be checked by a doctor or nurse. It is important to note that you might feel symptoms in one part of your body that could actually mean a problem in another part. Even if the symptoms don't seem related, they could be. Keep track of your symptoms. If you have any of these symptoms, make an appointment to see your doctor. Listen to what your body is telling you, and be sure to describe every symptom in detail to your doctor.

Note: A chart of diagnostic tests that your provider might order is also available.

Signs of a heart attack

The most common sign of a heart attack is mild or strong pain or discomfort in the center of the chest. It can last more than a few minutes, or it can go away and come back.



Other common signs of a heart attack include:

- pain or discomfort in one or both arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- shortness of breath (feeling like you can't get enough air)

- nausea or vomiting
- feeling faint or woozy
- breaking out in a cold sweat

Warning: Some women may feel very tired, sometimes for days or weeks before a heart attack occurs. Women may also have heartburn, a cough, or heart flutters or lose their appetite.

Signs of a stroke

A stroke happens fast. The most common signs of a stroke are sudden:



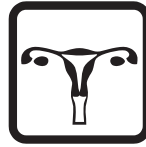
- numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- confusion or trouble speaking or understanding
- severe headache with no known cause

If you have any of these symptoms or see anyone with these symptoms, call 911 right away. Every minute counts!



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Symptoms of reproductive health problems



- bleeding or spotting between periods
- itching, burning, or irritation (including bumps, blisters, or sores) of the vagina or genital area
- pain or discomfort during sex
- severe or painful bleeding with periods
- moderate to severe pelvic or abdominal pain
- unusual (for you) vaginal discharge of any type or color or with strong odor
- pain or other problems while urinating or moving bowels

Symptoms of breast problems



- hard lump or knot in or near the breast or in your underarm
- dimpling, puckering, or ridges of the skin on the breast
- change in the size or shape of your breast
- clear or bloody fluid that leaks out of nipple
- itchy or scaly sore or rash on the nipple
- unusual swelling, warmth, or redness

Symptoms of lung problems



- coughing up blood or mucus
- shortness of breath
- wheezing
- a cough that won't go away
- uncomfortable or painful breathing

- a feeling of tightness in the chest

Symptoms of stomach or digestive problems



- bleeding from the rectum
- blood or mucus in the stool (including diarrhea) or black or clay-colored stools
- change in bowel habits or not being able to control bowels
- constipation, diarrhea, or both
- heartburn or acid reflux (feels like burning in throat or mouth)
- stomach pain or discomfort, such as bloating
- nausea and vomiting
- unexplained weight loss or weight gain

Symptoms of bladder problems



- difficult or painful urination
- frequent urination, intense urges to urinate, or loss of bladder control
- urine that is bloody, cloudy, dark, or strong smelling
- long-term pain in the back or sides

Symptoms of skin problems



- changes in the skin, such as changes in existing moles or new growths
- moles that are no longer round or have irregular borders
- moles that change colors or change in size (usually get bigger)
- frequent flushing (a sudden feeling of



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- heat)
- jaundice (when the skin and whites of the eyes turn yellow)
- painful, crusting, scaling, or oozing sores that don't heal
- sensitivity to sun

Symptoms of muscle or joint problems



- muscle pains and body aches that are persistent, or that come and go often
- numbness, tingling (pins and needles sensation), or discomfort in hands, feet, or limbs
- pain, stiffness, swelling, or redness in or around joints

Symptoms of mental health problems



Note: These symptoms can have a physical cause and are usually treatable.

- anxiety and constant worry
- depression: feeling empty, sad all the time, or worthless
- extreme fatigue, even when rested
- extreme tension that can't be explained
- flashbacks and nightmares about traumatic events
- no interest in getting out of bed or doing regular activities, including eating or sex
- thoughts about suicide and death
- seeing or hearing things that aren't there (hallucinations)

- seeing things differently from what they are (delusions)
- “baby blues” that haven't gone away two weeks after giving birth and seem to get worse over time
- thoughts about harming yourself or your baby after giving birth
- desire to starve or vomit on purpose
- desire to binge on food excessively