

# Warning Signs Of A **HEART ATTACK**

For Men and Women

Arm Yourself With Key  
Information Because Early  
Intervention Saves Lives



# Table of Contents

<b>WHAT IS A HEART ATTACK .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chest Discomfort.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Arm Pain .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Upper Back Pain .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Jaw Pain, Toothache, Headache.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Shortness Of Breath .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Discomfort In The Abdomen .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Nausea, Heartburn Or Indigestion.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sweating .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Sudden Onset Of Fatigue .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Swollen Feet And Ankles .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>No Symptoms.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CONSIDERATIONS FOR MEN.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>CONSIDERATIONS FOR WOMEN .....</b>	<b>6</b>

<b>Chest Pain .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Pain in Arms, Back, Neck or Jaw.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Stomach Pain .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Shortness of Breath, Lightheadedness, Fatigue or Nausea.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Sweating .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE ANY SIGNS .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>WHAT NOT TO DO IF YOU HAVE ANY SIGNS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>FINAL THOUGHTS.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Regular Check-Ups.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Stop Smoking, Excessive Drinking and Drugs .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Start Exercising.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Modify Your Diet .....</b>	<b>10</b>

**Disclaimer: This publication is for informational purposes only and is not intended as medical advice. Medical advice should always be obtained from a qualified medical professional for any health conditions or symptoms associated with them. Every possible effort has been made in preparing and researching this material. We make no warranties with respect to the accuracy, applicability of its contents or any omissions.**

**If you have any warning, signs of a heart attack, you need to seek emergency medical care immediately.**

# WHAT IS A HEART ATTACK

Heart attacks happen when blood stops flowing to the heart causing damage to the muscle of the heart.

Heart attacks occur when blood flowing to the heart, which brings oxygen, is either completely or partially blocked as a result of narrowing of the arteries that are the avenues by which blood flows to the heart.

The buildup of fat cholesterol in addition to other substances aptly referred to as plaque block arterial pathways with a mixture of cholesterol, fatty substances, calcium, cellular waste products, and fibrin, which clots the blood.

**There are many factors, which can lead up to a heart attack, such as:**

- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- High cholesterol
- Excessive intake of alcohol
- Lack of exercise
- Poor diet



**According To The American Heart Association:**

- While death from heart disease fell by 38% from 2003 to 2013, the burden and risk factors are still alarmingly high.
- In the United States, Heart disease occurs in someone once every 42 seconds
- Heart disease remains the #1 cause of death in the United States, killing more than 370,000 people each year

## **WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK**

Most heart attacks don't look anything like they show in movies. Sure, there are people who have had symptoms that come off as sudden and intense. Still, the majority of people who have had a heart attack say the signs started off slowly, with only mild pain or a sense of discomfort.

Either way, being aware of the signs of a heart attack can save your life, or the life of someone you love. Heart attack symptoms differ among people; there is a diversity of symptoms among those who have had a heart attack.

Some of the better-known symptoms are pressure in one or both arms, chest pain or discomfort, and shortness of breath. Here are the symptoms of a heart attack in further detail.

### **Chest Discomfort**

Chest discomfort that feels like a squeezing sensation is the most common symptom of a heart attack in both men and women. However, it can take many different forms such as tightness in the chest, chest pains, a sense of fullness in the chest area, or a squeezing sensation. This discomfort usually lasts a few minutes. It may also go away completely then return and last for another few minutes. It can occur whether you're sitting down, resting, or doing any type of physical activity.

### **Arm Pain**

Another very common symptom of a heart attack is pain in the arm. This type of pain is more common to the left arm, but can also occur in the right arm as well. It usually starts as chest pain then spreads to the arms, sometimes even to the shoulder area. The pain can also spread to the wrists and fingers.

### **Upper Back Pain**

The upper back is another area to which the pain can spread. More often than not, this type of pain is described as occurring between the shoulder blades.

## **Jaw Pain, Toothache, Headache**

Any type of pain that starts in the chest and starts spreading to the arms, the neck, or jaw can be symptomatic of a heart attack. Some people also describe having tooth pains or headaches as symptoms prior to suffering from a heart attack. In addition, there are those who suffer from these pains without having any chest pains at all.

## **Shortness Of Breath**

Gasping for air or feeling as if you're running out of breath is another very common symptom of having a heart attack. Shortness of breath, medically known as dyspnea, or having a difficult time breathing may occur right before or during a heart attack. In some cases, shortness of breath may be accompanied with or without chest pains.

## **Discomfort In The Abdomen**

The feeling of discomfort in the stomach area is usually described as one of heaviness than sharp or stabbing pain. It usually lasts for a few minutes. This symptom can be accompanied with or without pain in the chest area.

## **Nausea, Heartburn Or Indigestion**

Feeling sick in your stomach is one of the lesser known symptoms of a heart attack, but it has been reported by many people. Sometimes belching, or burping, is accompanied by the nausea, along with a feeling of indigestion and heartburn. The nausea accompanying a heart attack can also cause vomiting at times.

## **SWEATING**

Some people have described their symptoms as though they're breaking out in a cold sweat suddenly and for no apparent reason. This is one of the less common symptoms that can accompany a heart attack, especially if it happens along with other symptoms.

## Sudden Onset Of Fatigue

One of the most agreed upon symptom is one of feeling unwell in a general sense, like coming down with the flu. Sometimes it can be a sense of being lightheaded, fainting, feeling a sense of anxiousness or panic.

Feeling unsteady suddenly or losing your balance, feeling winded after doing something that caused you no problems before while having chest discomfort could be a sign that your blood pressure has dropped because the heart isn't pumping blood in the way that it should.



## Swollen Feet And Ankles

When the heart isn't pumping blood as fast as it should, this causes the blood to back in the veins. As a result, your lower extremities swell up.

Another reason could be that with heart failure, the kidneys have a hard time getting rid of the extra sodium and water from the body which leads to a feeling of bloating and swelling of the feet and ankles.

## NO SYMPTOMS

Often occurring more in those with diabetes, having a "silent" heart attack occurs in one quarter of all cases. Usually people experience vague symptoms but they attribute these mild symptoms to stress or indigestion and don't give it a second thought.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR MEN

The onset of symptoms of a heart attack, or myocardial infarction (MI), can be gradual for men. It lasts for only a few minutes, but to the person experiencing them, those minutes feel like an eternity. Sometimes symptoms can stop only to return again. This can happen for a good part of the day, may be even for several days. One of the most common symptoms of a heart attack is chest pain, which is a result of inadequate pumping of the blood, and hence a good supply of oxygen of the heart muscle.

Chest pain is the most common symptom, which can encompass a feeling of tightness, pressure or squeezing in the chest arm. It can also spread to the arms, shoulders, back, and upper abdomen.

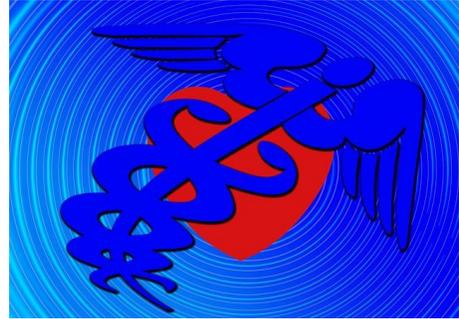


Another common symptom is shortness of breath that happens suddenly and unexpectedly without doing anything to cause physical exertion. Shortness of breath happens when the damage to the heart puts a limit on the amount of blood being pumped out of the left ventricle. Other symptoms can be excessive sweating, mainly cold sweats that resemble stress-related sweat, a sense of weakness or fatigue, light-headedness, nausea, vomiting and an irregular heartbeat.

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR WOMEN

Women usually experience more symptoms compared to men. In addition, even though women's most common symptom is chest discomfort similar to men, they have also reported symptoms different from those of the men's, especially with the elderly and those suffering from diabetes.

In women, the most common symptom is weakness and fatigue, as well as sleep disturbances. Moreover, women tend to experience back or jaw pain during, or prior to, a heart attack episode more than men. Even though women tend to dismiss what they're feeling because they don't want to waste time in an emergency room, or don't want to worry their family members, they are, in fact, better than men at deciding what is usual for themselves and their bodies and what's not.



Here are a few of the most common symptoms in detail:

### CHEST PAIN

It may be the most common heart attack symptom, but women experience it differently than men since for the former, it can be anywhere in the chest, not just on the left side. Cardiologist Rita Redberg, MD, director of Women's Cardiovascular Services at the University of California, San Francisco says, "It's truly uncomfortable during a heart attack, like a vise being tightened."

### PAIN IN ARMS, BACK, NECK OR JAW

Since it's expected to feel pain on the left side of the body prior to a heart attack, experiencing pain in the back or jaw is what throws women off sometimes, as they don't relate that type of pain to a heart attack. This type of pain can be sudden or may start gradually before becoming stronger and can last for a few minutes then fade before starting up again.

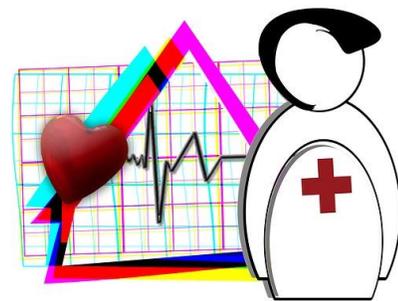
## STOMACH PAIN

Feelings of heartburn or indigestion are sometimes symptoms of a heart attack that women often overlook. Nieca Goldberg, MD, medical director of the Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health at NYU Langone Medical Center in New York says, "Women sometimes experience severe abdominal pressure that feels like an elephant sitting on your stomach."

## SHORTNESS OF BREATH, LIGHTHEADEDNESS, FATIGUE OR NAUSEA

Sometimes women find it difficult to breathe for no apparent reason. That could be a signal of a heart attack, especially it happens with one, or more of the other symptoms mentioned. Women have reported feeling out of breath as if they just completed a marathon without actually moving all that much.

Feeling exhausted and weak for no obvious reason, or after doing simple activities that didn't cause problems before, is also another heart attack symptom. It can sometimes occur to women even if they've been sitting down for a while or are doing simple movements, like going to the bathroom.



Women have reported experiencing nausea, which sometimes leads to vomiting, more than men. Feeling lightheaded when resting or sitting down, or even when doing a simple activity you're used to are other symptoms to watch out for.

## SWEATING

Sweating is a natural, healthy process of the body to get rid of excess toxins and cool down the body from the inside out. However, it could be a sign of trouble ahead if a cold sweat suddenly occurs without any noticeable reason for it. Breaking out in a sudden cold sweat is akin to stress-related sweating. It's not anything like perspiring after a workout, or spending time outside in the heat.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE ANY SIGNS

The first thing you should do if you have experienced any one of the above-mentioned symptoms is to talk to a medical expert about what your risks are when it comes to heart disease.

Early diagnosis and treatment is exceedingly important for averting any problems that can arise and lead to a reduction in the heart's performance, or any extensive damage to the muscle itself.

After that, if you are noticing any or more of the symptoms mentioned above in you or in someone you know, doctors agree that you should get it checked out. Not everyone has the same symptoms, so even if you're in doubt as to what the symptoms you're suffering from mean, you should get it checked out anyway just to be safe. Even a person who has experienced a heart attack before may have different symptoms in a later episode.



In addition, you should make it a point to get regular checkups, especially if you're over 60, are overweight, have high cholesterol or diabetes or high blood pressure. An American Heart Association representative, Vincent Bufalino, MD, says, "The more risk factors you have, the more you should be concerned about anything that might be heart-related."

If you believe, you are having a heart attack it is critical to seek emergency medical care at the moment the symptoms occur.

## WHAT NOT TO DO IF YOU HAVE ANY SIGNS

- Don't put off getting help. Women do this more than men do, but even if the symptoms aren't that bad or you convince yourself that they will pass, remember that early detection means early cure and better health for longer.
- Don't drive yourself to the hospital. You might hurt yourself or someone else. Therefore, the best thing you should do is wait for the ambulance to arrive.
- Don't wait for friends or family to drive you. They may take too long and you might not get there in time, call an ambulance instead.



## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

Many healthcare providers and medical experts agree that heart disease can be prevented. Here are some tips that can help keep you safe and minimize your chances of having a heart attack:

### **REGULAR CHECK-UPS**

Schedule an appointment on a regular basis to get as much information as you can regarding your personal risk for heart disease.

### **STOP SMOKING, EXCESSIVE DRINKING AND DRUGS**

Refraining from these harmful substances for one year can decrease your chances of coronary heart disease by half.

### **START EXERCISING**

You can exercise in a number of ways; pick the one that best suits your physical abilities, time constraints, family commitments etc. and stick with it. This can be simply walking for half an hour on a daily basis, swimming three times a week, or any other type of exercise that strengthens the cardiovascular system whose main component is, of course, the heart.

### **MODIFY YOUR DIET**

The internet is chock full of ideas when it comes to cooking healthy recipes. It's also very easy to tweak and modify recipes to match your preferences. There are also numerous books you can find at your local library or bookstore that have great recipes, ideas and tips on cooking healthy for you and your family.

There are many substitutions that cut calories without compromising any of the good taste. You'll also find healthful snacking ideas and better ways to cook your meals without packing on the calories.