

Symptoms of a Heart Attack



A heart attack, also known as acute myocardial infarction, or AMI, is an urgent message from your heart that it's starved for oxygen. When a clot blocks a heart vessel, oxygen-rich blood can't reach your heart. Then heart muscle begins to die and symptoms of a heart attack begin. The sooner you get to the hospital, the sooner treatment can start to help save your life and your heart muscle.

Don't be afraid to call 911, even if you're not sure you are having a heart attack. If you don't know the cause of your symptoms, assume it's a heart attack. Play it safe and get medical help.

Warning signs of a heart attack

- 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. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.

Note for women: Like men, women most commonly have chest pain or discomfort as a heart attack symptom. But women are somewhat more likely than men to have some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea, and vomiting, back pain, or jaw pain.