

Warning signs of a heart attack

How you know, and what you should do.

Knowing the symptoms of a heart attack can save your life, the life of a loved one, or even the life of a complete stranger. When it comes to a heart attack, time is everything. The sooner you get medical treatment, the better your chances of surviving a heart attack.

It's not always easy to remember all the warning signs and what you should do. Be prepared—keep a copy of this information with you at home, at work, or in your wallet. Talk to your doctor about whether you're at risk.

If you or anyone you know is experiencing any of these warning signs of a heart attack:

Call **9-1-1** or your local emergency number immediately. If you can't make the call, have someone call for you.

- If you take nitroglycerin, take the recommended dosage.
- Chew and swallow one 325 mg ASA tablet (acetylsalicylic acid) or two 81 mg tablets (low-dose ASA) if you are experiencing chest pain. It is important to chew or crush the tablet so that the medication works quickly. Chewing an ASA tablet at the first signs of a heart attack can reduce the risk of death. Other pain relievers such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen will not help in emergency situations such as heart attack.
- Rest by sitting or lying down in a comfortable position while waiting for emergency medical services to arrive.

Symptoms of a heart attack

1. Pain or discomfort in the chest

- Pain may feel like burning, fullness, pressure, or tightness
- The pain may not go away even with rest
- The pain or discomfort may come and go

2. Pain or discomfort in the upper body

- Pain or discomfort may start in the chest and spread to the neck, jaw, teeth, shoulder, arms, or back.

3. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

4. Nausea, vomiting, or pain in your stomach that feels like heartburn

5. Sweating with cold, clammy skin

6. Dizziness or feeling like you might pass out

7. Anxiety and other emotional symptoms such as fear and denial

8. Women may describe or experience heart attacks differently from men

- Pain may be more vague in women, but the most common symptom in women is still chest pain
- Women may be more likely to have abdominal pain, difficulty breathing, nausea, back or jaw pain, or unexplained fatigue during a heart attack