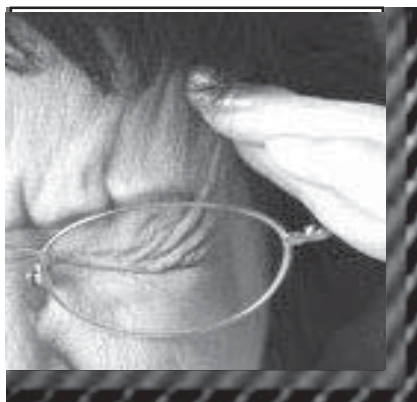


Am I having a Myocardial Infarction, HEART ATTACK?

"I woke up one morning with a kind of thump in my chest and a slight aching in both arms. Thinking it was arthritis, I got up and started flexing my fingers and arms, but the pain just got deeper...I knew something was wrong, but it never dawned on me that I was having a heart attack."

"It started out as very bad pain, and I thought it was indigestion. I kept thinking that, well it'll pass... My wife wanted me to go to the hospital, but I wouldn't go until I almost fell."



"While on a fishing trip I started casting a net to get some bait. I felt a pain in my chest that went all the way to my back, just like somebody was cracking my ribs. Some people say it's like an elephant on top of you and you want to get it off."

At age 47. For several weeks I had a stiff painful shoulder, also felt as if had a severe sinus infection, my teeth, and in and around my mouth were painful and sore. On a couple of occasions I woke up in the morning to a very dull but definite pain in the middle of my back which went away and I attributed to a bad night's sleep. I never experienced any chest, arm pain or shortness of breath during those weeks. One night I woke up sweating, cold, clammy, nauseated, and a strange pain between my shoulder blades, I initially thought I had food poisoning the nausea was so bad. The pain then traveled down my arms and across my chest like electrical

shocks. I call 911. They rushed me to the hospital where they found that I had a 99% blockage in the main artery. The Doctor said I survived the big Coronary Occlusion? A heart attack. If we had not called 911, I would have not survived. Never hesitate to have anything unusual checked out, had I waited for the massive pain it would have been too late.

"As I got up out of the tub I started to have trouble breathing...I felt dizzy and even I didn't think this was what a heart attack would be like, I told my son. Luckily, my son called 911 so quickly that my heart wasn't damaged."

"To a spouse going through this, I would say to listen to the person who's experiencing the situation. My wife was not feeling well and she told me that it was something else and we went to sleep. She had difficulty for sleeping, but she didn't wake. It is important to be informed. If you know the heart attack symptoms and if you use your own wisdom, as soon as the symptoms begin, call 911 without hesitation."

"My sister had a heart attack and had just been discharged from the hospital. At that moment I got a mild pain, just in my left shoulder and I told her doctor. Immediate, he made

a fast test and told me that it was a heart attack, I thought, 'What are our chances of having one more? He talked to us about how to take care of our health. Now, we exercise, cook and we do a lot of things together together as a family. A healthier one.'

I am a 48 years old health care worker. For Thanksgiving day I was having Sunday lunch with a friend and my daughter when it felt as if someone had punched me in the middle of my chest and I broke out in a sweat. I turned to my friend and said "if I didn't know better, I would think I am having a heart attack" my daughter said "mom you don't look right either." But I had a cold and thought maybe I had pneumonia. Since the pain was not debilitating and it was just a 'little uncomfortable' I encouraged my daughter and friend to finish lunch while I went to the car and reclined the seat until they arrived. Still thinking it was a bad case of pneumonia, I went home, changed clothes and tried to rest. The pain, by this time was a little more intense (and after several hours had gone by) I suggested to my husband to go to urgent care. The physician there did an EKG and suggested calling an ambulance. Again, thinking the doctor was wrong I suggested that my husband drive me to the ER, because I was sure it was pneumonia. By the time I arrived at the ER, the Urgent Care physician had faxed my EKG. They whisked me to through registration, into a gown and in a bed with IVs going before I could even think. As I was explaining that I was sure it was pneumonia, the on call cardiologist walked into the room and explained that I was in the middle of a heart attack and was fortunate to be conscious. I came through it well and with only minimal muscle damage to my heart. If I had gone on my first instinct and sought help, there would probably not have been any damage. Also, because I did not lose consciousness and the pain was not as intense as I had heard described, I did not hear what my heart was telling me!

CONTINUED

What is a Coronary Thrombosis HEART ATTACK

"I felt tired, a shortness of breath, and like my heart was fluttering a little. Some pain, but not bad. I just had to stop and rest a while before I could go ahead."

When a heart attack occurs, the blood supply to part of the heart muscle itself -- the myocardium -- is severely reduced or stopped because a clot blocks the flow of blood to the heart, then when the heart attack occurs, the heart muscle begins to die and the more time that passes without treatment, the greater the damage.

Fortunately, clot-busting drugs and other artery-opening treatments can stop a heart attack in its tracks. Given immediately after symptoms begin, these treatments can prevent or limit damage to the heart. The sooner they are started, the better they will do—and the greater the chances are of a full recovery. To be most effective, these treatments need to be given within 1 hour of the start of heart attack symptoms.

DELAY CAN BE DEADLY

Most people having a heart attack wait too long to seek medical help, and that can be a fatal mistake. People often take a wait-and-see approach, delaying medical attention because they: Do not recognize the symptoms of a heart attack and think that what they are feeling is due to something else, or are afraid or unwilling to admit that their symptoms could be serious, or are embarrassed about "causing a scene," or going to the hospital and finding out it is a false alarm. Others do not understand the importance of getting to the hospital right away. As a result, most heart attack victims wait 2 or more hours after their symptoms begin before they seek medical help. This delay can result in death or permanent heart damage — damage that can greatly reduce their ability to do everyday activities.

Many people think that heart attacks are mostly a "man's problem," yet heart disease is actually the number one killer of both men and women in the United States. In men, the risk for heart attack



increases after age 45. In women, heart attacks are more likely to occur after age 50. Besides age... Factors that increase the risk heart attack include A previous heart attack or angina, family history, Diabetes, High blood cholesterol, High blood pressure, Cigarette smoking, Overweight, and no physical activity.

If you have one or more of these factors, see your health care provider to find out how to reduce your risk of having a heart attack.

SYMPTOMS

- **Chest Discomfort-** Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
- **Discomfort in Other Areas** of the Upper Body. This may be felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- **Shortness of Breath-** May often occurs with or before chest discomfort.
- **Other Signs-** May include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or light-headedness.

EVERY MINUTE COUNT

Anyone with heart attack warning signs needs to get medical treatment right away. Don't wait more than a few minutes—5 minutes at most—to call 9-1-1.

FAST ACTION SAVE LIVES

If you or someone you are with begins to have chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other symptoms of a heart attack, call 9-1-1 right away. Don't wait.

BY CALLING 911 and taking an ambulance you will get to the hospital in the fastest way possible.

There also are other benefits to calling 9-1-1:

- Emergency personnel can begin treatment immediately—even before you arrive at the hospital.
- Your heart may stop beating during a heart attack. Emergency personnel have the equipment and training needed to start it beating again.

- Heart attack patients who arrive by ambulance tend to receive faster treatment on their arrival at the hospital.

PRECAUTION.-

Take note > If you are having heart attack symptoms and for some reason cannot call 9-1-1, have someone else drive you at once to the hospital. > **Never drive yourself, unless there is absolutely no other choice.**

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