



Can You Tell A Heart Attack Coming

If you are having any one of the symptoms described below that lasts for more than 5 minutes, **SEEK EMERGENCY TREATMENT WITHOUT DELAY**. These symptoms could be the signs of a heart attack and immediate treatment is essential.

- **Angina:** Chest pain or discomfort in the center of the chest; also described as a heaviness, tightness, pressure, aching, burning, numbness, fullness or squeezing feeling that lasts for more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back. It is sometimes mistakenly thought to be indigestion or heartburn.
- Pain or discomfort in other areas of the upper body including the arms, left shoulder, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Difficult breathing or shortness of breath
- Nausea or vomiting
- Light-headedness, dizziness, extreme weakness or anxiety
- Rapid or irregular heart beats
- Sweating or "cold sweat"
- Fullness, indigestion, or choking feeling (may feel like "heartburn")

Silent MI

Some people have a heart attack without having any symptoms (a "silent" myocardial infarction). A silent MI can occur among all patients, though it is more common among people with diabetes. A silent MI may be diagnosed during a routine doctor's exam.

If You Take Nitroglycerin

If you have been prescribed nitroglycerin and you experience angina, stop what you are doing and rest. Take one nitroglycerin tablet and let it dissolve under your tongue, or if using the spray form, spray it under your tongue. Wait 5 minutes. If you still have angina after 5 minutes, call 911 to get emergency help.

For patients diagnosed with chronic stable angina:

If you experience angina, take one nitroglycerin tablet and let it dissolve under your tongue, repeating every 5 minutes for up to 3 tablets spanning 15 minutes. If you still have angina after taking 3 doses of nitroglycerin, call 911 to get emergency help.

Use of aspirin with unstable chest pain:

After calling 911, emergency personnel may tell you to chew one full (325 mg) aspirin slowly, if you do not have a history of aspirin allergy or bleeding. Aspirin is especially effective if taken within 30 minutes after the start of symptoms. **Do NOT take an aspirin for symptoms of stroke.** Continue to take your nitroglycerin as prescribed.



REASON NOT TO DELAY

At the first signs of a heart attack, call for emergency treatment (3911 at work or 911). Do not wait for your symptoms to "go away." Early recognition and treatment of heart attack symptoms can reduce the risk of heart damage and allow treatment to be started immediately.

Even if you're not sure your symptoms are those of a heart attack, you should still be evaluated.

The best time to treat a heart attack is within one hour of the onset of the first symptoms. When a heart attack occurs, there's a limited amount of time before significant and long-lasting damage occurs to the heart muscle.

If a large area of the heart is injured during the heart attack, full recovery becomes much more difficult.

Studies show that the people who have symptoms of a heart attack often delay, or wait to seek treatment, for longer than seven hours.

Reasons people delay:

- They are young and don't believe a heart attack could happen to them
- Symptoms are not what they expected
- They may deny the symptoms are serious and wait until they go away
- They may ask the advice of others, especially family members
- They may first try to treat the symptoms them-selves, using aspirin or antacids
- They may think the symptoms are related to other health problems (upset stomach, arthritis)
- They may put the care of others first (take care of children or other family members) and not want to worry them

Waiting just a couple hours for medical help may limit your treatment options, increase the amount of damage to your heart muscle, and reduce your chance of survival.