Know the Signs and Symptoms of a Heart Attack

About Heart Attack

- A heart attack happens when the blood supply to the heart is cut off. Cells in the heart muscle that do not receive enough oxygen-carrying blood begin to die. The more time that passes without treatment to restore blood flow, the greater the damage to the heart.
- Every year about 750,000 Americans have a heart attack. Of these, 550,000 are a first heart attack and 200,000 happen in people who have already had a heart attack.¹
- About 15% of people who have a heart attack will die from it.¹
- Almost half of sudden cardiac deaths happen outside a hospital.²
- Having high blood pressure or high blood cholesterol, smoking, having had a previous heart attack or stroke, or having diabetes can increase your chance of developing heart disease and having a heart attack.
- It is important to recognize the signs of a heart attack and to act immediately by calling 911. A person's chance of surviving a heart attack increases if emergency treatment is administered as soon as possible.

Source: Interactive Atlas of Heart Disease and Stroke
Symptoms of a Heart Attack

The **National Heart Attack Alert Program** notes these major signs of a heart attack:

**Chest pain or discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center or left side of the chest that lasts for more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.

**Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.

**Shortness of breath.** Often comes along with chest discomfort. But it also can occur before chest discomfort.

**Other symptoms.** May include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or light-headedness.

If you think that you or someone you know is having a heart attack, you should **call 911 immediately.**

**CDC's Public Health Efforts**

- State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Chronic Diseases
- Million Hearts®

**For More Information**

For more information on heart disease, visit our Web site at [www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/](http://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/) and the Web sites of the following CDC partners:

- American Heart Association
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
- National Heart Attack Alert Program

**References**
