



Heart Attacks: Know the Warning Signs

Learn the signs, but remember this: Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, have it checked out. Don't wait more than five minutes to call 9-1-1.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama cares about your health and wellness.

This is an informational series designed to provide specific ideas for a healthy and safe lifestyle.

Heart attack is a leading killer of both men and women in the United States. A heart attack occurs when blood flow to a section of heart muscle becomes blocked. If the flow of blood isn't restored quickly, the section of heart muscle becomes damaged from lack of oxygen and begins to die.

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Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs of a heart attack and a warning to get help immediately!

- 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, lightheadedness, or numbness, weakness or a cold feeling in the legs or arms.



As with men, a woman's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea and/or vomiting, and back or jaw pain.



There are excellent treatments for heart attack that can save lives and prevent disabilities. Treatment is most effective when started within one hour of the beginning of symptoms. If you think you or someone you're with is having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 right away.