

Controlling your risk: Act! if you think you're having a heart attack

Your heart is a big muscle fed by your coronary arteries. These arteries may get blocked or narrowed by cholesterol, a blood clot, or a spasm.

Angina is due to a partial narrowing of a coronary artery. Angina does not cause lasting damage. It is a warning that your heart is not getting the oxygen it needs.



A heart attack is caused by complete blockage of a coronary artery and it kills heart cells. Heart attack damage is permanent and can be fatal.

The signs of a heart attack and angina may be the same. Some common signs include...

- chest discomfort that may be described as pressure, tightness or squeezing, burning, heaviness, a feeling of fullness, indigestion, or gas that doesn't go away.
- discomfort that spreads to your back, neck, jaw, one or both arms.

You may also have with any of the following...

- shortness of breath
- sudden sweating that begins before or with the pain
- nausea or vomiting
- sudden weakness.

You may experience any, some, or all of the symptoms. They usually last longer than a few minutes.

If you are having these signs

- Sit or lie down.
- If you have nitroglycerine, take up to 3 doses. Space each dose 5 minutes apart.
- If you don't have nitroglycerine, rest for 10 to 15 minutes.
- Get help if you still have any symptoms after rest or 3 nitroglycerin.
- Take one adult aspirin or four baby aspirin, if you are not allergic to aspirin!



Call 911, an ambulance, or rescue unit.

Never drive yourself. Pain and heart damage can worsen suddenly. Ambulances have resources that improve your chances for surviving.

Have someone else take you to the hospital, only if it will be much quicker than waiting for rescue.

**When in doubt
call the hospital, your doctor or 911 !**

