

TIPS

to help you survive
a heart attack ...
before you get
to the hospital.




Signs and symptoms of a possible heart attack

- 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 or jaw.
- Shortness of breath. May occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs: These may include sudden cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. However, more than 40 percent of women experience no chest pain. Common symptoms in women include shortness of breath, unusual fatigue, cold sweat, dizziness, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

Source: American Heart Association

Call 9-1-1

- Call 9-1-1. Tell the operator "I think I'm having a heart attack."
- Chew one non-expired adult-strength aspirin/nitroglycerin or four baby aspirin. Keep several supplies in areas where you spend the most time – kitchen, bathroom, bedroom, living areas, your pants pocket or purse. Keep these and all medications away from children.
- Unlock your front door. Get into a position of comfort by the door.
- Have an information packet readily available for the paramedics such as a wallet card with your medical history and list of current medications. 

Why call 9-1-1 instead of driving yourself to the hospital?

Time lost is heart muscle lost. You will delay your treatment if you drive yourself to the hospital. The paramedics can begin treatment as quickly as possible once they reach you. They will also notify the hospital that you are coming. The hospital can then alert the interventional cardiologists and other heart attack team members so they are ready if you need a procedure such as balloon angioplasty or stenting.



What should I have in my information / health history packet?

- Driver's license or photo ID (or photocopy).
- Health insurance cards (or photocopies) and an insurance contact phone number.
- Copy of your living will or advance directive.
- List of all medications, vitamins and supplements you are currently taking. Include dosages and frequency.
- Short description(s) of all current medical conditions or chronic illnesses.
- A list of allergies and chemical intolerances.
- Phone numbers (with area codes) of your family doctor, local pharmacy and specialists.
- Phone numbers (with area codes) of relatives or family friends who may be contacted.

Signs and symptoms of possible cardiac arrest

- Unconscious
- No pulse
- Not breathing

When someone suffers cardiac arrest, they lose consciousness because they have no pulse and therefore, no oxygen is flowing through the body and to the brain. The best chance of survival is to have someone physically close to the person initiate the following steps:

- 1 Call, or ask someone else to call, 9-1-1.**
- 2 Immediately begin CPR. Place your hands in the center of the person's chest, push down at least two inches. Continue this process until help arrives or someone else can take over. 100 compressions per minute is ideal.**
- 3 Ask anyone nearby to bring an automated external defibrillator (AED). These are available in many public locations and businesses. Initiate defibrillation.**

Save a life with CPR

CPR can make a difference in the lives of cardiac arrest victims. Learn about CPR by visiting our health library at www.PalmdaleRegional.com and search **Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation** for a variety of informative articles.

Are you at risk for a heart attack?

Take a Coronary Artery Disease Risk Assessment online at www.PalmdaleRegional.com.



Need a Doctor? Call Direct DoctorsSM Plus at 1-800-851-9780