

# Heart Attack Warning Signs

**Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly with mild pain or discomfort. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:**

**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 or lightheadedness.

## Difference in heart attack signs for women

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 less predictable symptoms, such as:

- Unusual fatigue
- Nausea/vomiting
- Indigestion
- Sleep disturbances
- Weakness in the arms
- Anxiety



Research by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) indicates that women often experience new or different physical symptoms as long as a month or more before experiencing heart attacks.

**A person should never wait more than five minutes to call for medical help. Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, have it checked out.**

Calling 911 is almost always the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services (EMS) staff can begin treatment up to an hour sooner than getting to the hospital by car. EMS staff are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance also usually receive faster treatment at the hospital.

### **Symptoms of heart disease which may lead to a heart attack**

You may be experiencing cardiovascular problems if you notice that ordinary physical activity causes you to experience the following symptoms:

- Undue fatigue
- Palpitations --- the sensation that your heart is skipping a beat or beating too rapidly
- Difficult or labored breathing
- Uncommon amount of chest discomfort from increased activity

**Continuum** understands how to properly care for someone with heart disease. To get an in-home care partner who works seamlessly with physicians to provide the best coordinated, specialized care, call today.

*Sources: American Heart Association, Usgovinfo.about.com*