

WARNING SIGNS OF HEART ATTACK AND STROKE

Knowing the warning signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke, as well as how to respond, could save your life or the life of a loved one. But many people don't know the signs. Do you?

IF YOU EXPERIENCE ANY OF THE WARNING SIGNS FOR HEART ATTACK OR STROKE, STOP WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY.

HEART ATTACK: WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

Heart disease is a "silent killer." It often has no symptoms or barely noticeable pain. The most commonly recognized symptom is chest pain that doesn't go away, pressure or other discomfort, called angina. This happens when the heart is getting too little blood or oxygen. It can be felt under the breastbone and tends to happen with exercise or extreme emotional stress. Women, however, are more likely than men to experience a different type of chest pain that is sharp and temporary.

Men

Typical heart attack symptoms include:

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
- Pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms.
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.

Women

Not all women are aware that heart attack symptoms can be different than men. Women are more likely to experience other, less common warning signs of heart attack including:

- Unusual chest pain (pain that is sharp and temporary).
- Stomach, back or arm pain.
- Nausea or dizziness, without chest pain.
- Shortness of breath and difficulty breathing, without chest pain.
- Unexplained anxiety, weakness or fatigue.
- Heart palpitations, cold sweat or paleness.

STROKE: WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS?

Understanding the warning signs of stroke is so important, because stroke can be treated, but every minute counts. The most effective stroke treatments are only available if the stroke is recognized and treatment is started within the first three hours of the first symptoms.

Note the time the first stroke symptom appears, because this information is important for making treatment decisions.

Men and Women

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

Women

While women can experience the classic symptoms of stroke above, they can also experience different symptoms that can be dismissed as something else. These include:

- Sudden nausea and vomiting: These symptoms are usually very sudden and are often accompanied by other more common stroke symptoms.
- Pain on one side of the body: In addition to or instead of the traditional numbness or tingling, women often feel pain that can occur anywhere in the body, such as the face, arm or leg.
- Hiccups: These involuntary contractions of the diaphragm are controlled by nerves in the brain that, when irritated, may cause a stroke. It is unknown why this occurs in women but not in men.
- Extreme exhaustion: Women often experience a sudden fit of sleepiness, such as the urge to lie down and take a nap before having a stroke. However, taking a nap is the worst thing you can do when having a stroke – your brain needs to stay awake so you can take action and get help right away.

IF YOU ARE WITH SOMEONE YOU BELIEVE MAY BE HAVING A STROKE, ACT F.A.S.T. AND DO THIS SIMPLE TEST:

- F** **Face Drooping?** See if the person is able to smile.
- A** **Arm Weakness?** Determine if the patient can raise their arms.
- S** **Speech Difficulty?** If the person's speech is slurred or strange, it could be a sign of stroke.
- T** **Time to Call 9-1-1.** If the person is experiencing any of the above signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

Sources:

National Stroke Association: stroke.org

American Stroke Association: strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG



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