

Heart attack symptoms:

Heart attack symptoms vary widely. The symptoms you experience may be different from those experienced by a relative or neighbor. For instance, you may have only minor chest pain while someone else has excruciating pain. In addition, women often have different heart attack symptoms than do men.

One thing applies to everyone, though: If you suspect you're having a heart attack, call for emergency medical help immediately. Don't waste time trying to diagnose the symptoms yourself.

Typical heart attack symptoms

Symptom	Description
Chest discomfort or pain	This discomfort or pain can feel like a tight ache, pressure, fullness or squeezing in the center of your chest lasting more than a few minutes. This discomfort may come and go.
Upper body pain	Pain or discomfort may spread beyond your chest to your shoulders, arms, back, neck, teeth or jaw. You may have upper body pain with no chest discomfort.
Stomach pain	Pain may extend downward into your abdominal area and may feel like heartburn.
Shortness of breath	You may pant for breath or try to take in deep breaths. This often occurs before you develop chest discomfort.
Anxiety	You may feel a sense of doom or feel as if you're having a panic attack for no apparent reason.
Lightheadedness	You may feel dizzy or feel like you might pass out.
Sweating	You may suddenly break into a sweat with cold, clammy skin.
Nausea and vomiting	You may feel sick to your stomach or vomit.

Common heart attack symptoms in women

Women may have all, none, many or a few of the typical heart attack symptoms. For women, as for men, the most common symptom of a heart attack is some type of pain, pressure or discomfort in the chest. But women are more likely than are men to also have symptoms unrelated to chest pain, such as:

Neck, jaw, shoulder, upper back or abdominal discomfort

Shortness of breath

Nausea or vomiting

Abdominal pain or "heartburn"

Sweating

Lightheadedness or dizziness

Unusual or unexplained fatigue

Heart attack symptoms demand emergency help

Some heart attacks have the classic symptoms as portrayed on television or in the movies - where someone clutches their chest and writhes in excruciating pain. Not all heart attacks announce themselves so clearly, though. In fact, most heart attacks begin with much more subtle symptoms - with only mild pain or discomfort. And your symptoms may come and go. Don't be tempted to downplay your symptoms or brush them off as indigestion or anxiety.

Getting treatment quickly improves your chance of survival and minimizes damage from a heart attack. Don't "tough out" these symptoms for more than five minutes. **Call 911** or other emergency medical services for help. If you don't have access to emergency medical services, have someone drive you to the nearest hospital. Drive yourself only as a last resort, if there absolutely no other options.