



Towson University ♥ St. Joseph Medical Center
Wellness Center

HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS & WARNING SIGNS

IF YOU THINK YOU'RE HAVING A HEART ATTACK, CALL 9-1-1 OR YOUR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SYSTEM IMMEDIATELY.

The American Heart Association says your body likely will have one or more of these symptoms:

Most common or "classic" warning signals of a heart attack

- 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

Less common warning signs of heart attack

- Atypical chest pain, stomach or abdominal pain
- Nausea or dizziness (without chest pain)
- Shortness of breath and difficulty breathing (without chest pain)
- Unexplained anxiety, weakness or fatigue
- Palpitations, cold sweat or paleness

All of these signs don't occur in every attack. Sometimes they go away and return. If some occur, get help fast. ***IF YOU NOTICE ONE OR MORE OF THESE SIGNS IN SOMEONE ELSE, DON'T WAIT. CALL 9-1-1 OR YOUR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SO THE PERSON CAN GET TO A HOSPITAL RIGHT AWAY!***

How do I know if a heart attack has occurred?

A doctor who's studied the results of several tests must diagnose a heart attack. The doctor will

- Review the patient's complete medical history.
- Give a physical examination.
- Use an electrocardiogram (e-lek"tro-KAR'de-o-gram) (EKG) to discover any abnormalities caused by damage to the heart. An EKG is a medical device that makes a graphical record of the heart's electrical activity.
- Sometimes use a blood test to detect abnormal levels of certain enzymes in the bloodstream.

Blood tests confirm (or refute) suspicions raised in the early stages of evaluation that may occur in an emergency room, intensive care unit or urgent care setting. These tests are sometimes called heart damage markers or cardiac enzymes.