

# Heart Attack

**A heart attack happens when the arteries to the heart are narrowed or blocked by fat and cholesterol buildup.** This prevents the heart from getting the blood and oxygen it needs. Without oxygen, the cells in the heart begin to die. The more time that passes without treatment, the greater the damage to the heart.

## Warning Signs of a Heart Attack

**You may have one or more of the following:**

- **Chest discomfort.** You may feel uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing, or pain in the center of the chest. It may last a few minutes or it may go away and come back.
- **Upper body pain.** You may have pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** This can occur before or along with chest discomfort.
- **Other symptoms.** You may also break out in a cold sweat, have nausea, or be lightheaded.

**Women may have some or none of the common signs of a heart attack.** Women may have:

- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Pain in the right back, shoulder, arm, throat, or neck
- Heavy sweating
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Indigestion or stomach pain

If you or someone you are with shows one or more of these signs, don't ignore them. **Call 9-1-1 to get medical help right away.**

## Reduce Your Risk of a Heart Attack

**You can reduce** your chance of having a heart attack by having a healthy lifestyle.

- **Be smoke free.** Get help to quit smoking.

- **Be physically active.** Regular physical activity makes the heart stronger. It helps lower blood pressure and blood cholesterol. It also helps you maintain a healthy weight. Try going for a brisk, 30-minute walk on most days of the week.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Eat foods with less saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Eat plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grain breads and cereals, and low-fat dairy foods and meats.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** High blood pressure and high blood cholesterol are more common among people who are overweight. A healthy weight can lower your blood pressure and blood cholesterol.
- **Limit alcohol intake.** If you drink alcohol, drink no more than one or two drinks per day.
- **Get regular checkups.** Your doctor can check your blood pressure, blood cholesterol, and weight to make sure they are at healthy levels.
- **Control your diabetes.** Having diabetes increases your chance of having a heart attack. If you have diabetes, follow your doctor's advice.



*Making these lifestyle changes can help you keep a healthy heart.*