

Signs and Symptoms of Heart Attack Differ in Women

Women may experience the following symptoms during a heart attack:

- vomiting (more women than men)
- nausea (more women than men)
- pain in the right back, shoulder, arm, throat and neck, or stomach
- profuse sweating
- shortness of breath
- fatigue
- indigestion

MANY WOMEN DO NOT REALIZE OR RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS OF A HEART ATTACK. The American Medical Women's Association reported that women generally wait an average of 18 minutes longer than men before seeking medical treatment. This may be attributed to the fact that many women do not experience the typical heart attack signs and symptoms characterized by men. Almost two thirds of all women who have a heart attack have no history of chest pain.

The most often published signs and symptoms of a heart attack are listed below. Women may experience some or none of these symptoms:

- 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

Findings regarding women and heart disease are dramatically different from men. While women are generally older when they experience their first heart attack, they are more likely than men to die within a few weeks. Studies show that 38 percent of women die within a year of a heart attack compared to 25 percent of men. Furthermore, women are 35 percent more likely to have a second heart attack within six years after the first, 18 percent will have a stroke, 34 percent will develop chest pain, and 46 percent will become disabled.

