

Heart Attack

CAREGIVER RESOURCE

Every 43 seconds, someone in the United States has a heart attack. Because your heart needs oxygen to survive, when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart is significantly reduced or blocked completely, a heart attack occurs. Most heart attacks are a result of coronary heart disease (CHD) – a condition where waxy substance called plaque builds up inside of the coronary arteries. This is called atherosclerosis. While this buildup occurs over a long period of time, the area of plaque can eventually break open inside of the artery causing a blood clot. If the clot is large enough, it can partially or fully block blood from flowing to the coronary artery. If this blockage isn't treated immediately, the part of the heart muscle that relies on this artery will begin to die and then scar tissue starts to replace healthy heart tissue. While this type of damage might not be obvious, it can cause severe or lifelong problems.

Source:

Source: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/heartattack/causes> (Accessed 8/3/16)

Heart attack symptoms

Heart attack symptoms vary. Some people have mild pain while others have more severe pain; others have no symptoms while the first sign for others may be sudden cardiac arrest (which is different than a heart attack). While heart attacks can strike suddenly, there can be warning signs and symptoms hours, days or weeks in advance.

The earliest warning sign may be reoccurring chest pain (angina). Angina is caused when the heart muscle doesn't get enough blood. It may feel like pressure or squeezing in the chest area. The pain or discomfort can be felt in the shoulders, arms, neck, jaw or back, as well. Often times, Angina is mistaken as indigestion.

Source: http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/HeartAttack/SymptomsDiagnosisofHeartAttack/Angina-Chest-Pain_UCM_450308_Article.jsp#.V6lJBrGLcs (Access 8/3/16)

Common heart attack symptoms include:

- Pressure, tightness, pain or a squeezing or aching sensation in your chest or arms that may spread to your neck, jaw or back
- Nausea, indigestion, heartburn or abdominal pain
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweat
- Fatigue
- Lightheadedness or sudden dizziness

Sudden cardiac arrest – when your heart suddenly stops – is not a heart attack. Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when an electrical disturbance disrupts your heart's pumping action and causes blood to stop flowing to the rest of your body. While a heart attack can cause cardiac arrest, it's not the only cause.

Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-attack/basics/definition/con-20019520> (Accessed 06.21.16)



Each Home Instead Senior Care® franchise office is independently owned and operated. ©2016 Home Instead, Inc.

**Home
Instead**
SENIOR CARE®
To us, it's personal.

Heart Attack

CAREGIVER RESOURCE

Heart attack treatments

If a client believes they are having a heart attack, call 911 immediately. Early treatment can prevent or limit damage to the heart muscle. Treatments include:

- Medications
- Medical procedures, e.g., coronary artery bypass grafting
- Healthy lifestyle changes
- Cardiac rehabilitation: a medically supervised program that may help improve the health and well-being of people who have heart problems.

Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-attack/basics/definition/con-20019520> (Accessed 06.21.16) *Complications of COPD*

Another option is coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG), surgery that improves blood flow to the heart. During CABG, a healthy artery or vein from the body is connected, or grafted, to the blocked coronary artery. The grafted artery or vein bypasses (that is, goes around) the blocked portion of the coronary artery. This creates a new path for oxygen-rich blood to flow to the heart muscle.

Source: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/cabg> (Accessed 8/18/16)

Role of a CAREGiverSM

- Remind the client to take their medication on a regular schedule
- Follow the doctor's recommendations and encourage the client to exercise regularly
- Plan and prepare healthy meals
- Provide transportation to medical appointments
- Be patient. It may take longer to complete tasks.
- Plan appropriate activities. A person with heart failure may not be able to walk long distances without frequent breaks
- Create a stress-free environment: when someone is anxious or upset their heart beats faster; they can breathe more intensely and their blood pressure can increase. This can increase the risk of heart failure.
- Encourage the client to get plenty of rest and a good night's sleep
- Recognize, report and record. Be vigilant and aware while caring for the client. Report any changes or concerns to the franchise office as soon as possible.
- Call the franchise office immediately if you recognize changes or if the client's symptoms worsen.



**Home
Instead**
SENIOR CARE®
To us, it's personal.