

Will you recognise your heart attack?



Important notes

- Warning signs differ from person to person.

Heart attacks are not always sudden or severe. Many start slowly with only mild pain or discomfort. Some people do not get chest pain at all—only discomfort in other parts of their upper body.

- No two heart attacks are the same.

Someone who has already had heart attack may have different symptoms the second time.

- Knowing the warning signs of heart attack and acting quickly can reduce the damage to your heart muscle and increase your chance of survival.

Too many people lose their lives because they wait too long to call Triple Zero (000).

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for individual health advice provided by your doctor or cardiologist (heart specialist).

The warning signs of heart attack can be varied and may not always be sudden or severe. You may have just one of these symptoms, or a combination of them. They can come on suddenly or develop over minutes and get progressively worse. Symptoms usually last for at least 10 minutes.

Warning signs could include:

- **Discomfort or pain in the centre of your chest**— this can often feel like a heaviness, tightness or pressure. People who have had a heart attack have commonly described it as like an “elephant sitting on my chest”, “a belt that’s been tightened around my chest” or “bad indigestion”. The discomfort may spread to different parts of your upper body.



Chest

- **Discomfort in these parts of your upper body:**



Arm(s)



Shoulder(s)



Neck



Jaw



Back

You may have a choking feeling in your throat. Your arms may feel heavy or useless.

- **You may also experience other signs and symptoms:**
 - feel short of breath
 - feel nauseous
 - have a cold sweat
 - feel dizzy or light-headed.

Some people have also described feeling generally unwell or “not quite right”. If you feel any heart attack symptoms, refer to your action plan and get help fast – call Triple Zero (000)*.

*If calling Triple Zero (000) does not work on your mobile phone, try 112.



Warning signs of heart attack—what to do

1. **Stop**—Immediately stop what you are doing and rest.
2. **Talk**—If you are with someone, tell them what you are feeling.
 - If any of your symptoms:
 - are severe
 - get worse quickly
 - have lasted 10 minutes
3. **Call Triple Zero (000)* now!**
 - Ask for an ambulance. Don't hang up. Wait for advice from the operator.

*If calling Triple Zero (000) does not work on your mobile phone, try 112.

Why is a heart attack an emergency?

With a heart attack, every minute counts. Too many people lose their lives because they take too long to call Triple Zero (000).

Getting to hospital quickly can reduce the damage to your heart muscle and increase your chance of survival. In hospital, staff will give you treatments that help to reduce this damage.

Why call Triple Zero (000)?

- The trained operator will decide if you need an ambulance
- You'll receive treatment as soon as you phone
- You'll receive advice on what to do while waiting for the ambulance to arrive.

Ambulance paramedics are trained to use special lifesaving equipment and to start early treatments for a heart attack inside the ambulance.

An ambulance is the safest and fastest way to get you to hospital. Attempting to get to hospital quickly in a private vehicle can be dangerous for the occupants of your vehicle and other road users.

It is always better to call Triple Zero (000) and find out it's not a heart attack than to wait until it is too late.

Want to know more?

For more information about the warning signs of heart attack, visit www.heartattackfacts.org.au or call our Health Information Service on 1300 36 27 87.

Be prepared

- Know the warning signs of heart attack and what to do.
- Keep your action plan handy on your fridge.
- Make sure that you have ambulance cover.
- Tell your family and friends about the warning signs of heart attack and what to do—don't keep this lifesaving message to yourself.
- Prevent a heart attack by taking steps to reduce your risk—talk to your doctor or visit www.heartfoundation.org.au.



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