



# What is a Heart Attack?

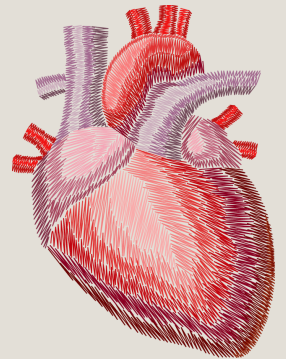


A heart attack is a life-threatening medical emergency that requires immediate treatment.

A heart attack, also known as a myocardial infarction, happens when the flow of blood that brings oxygen to a part of your heart muscle suddenly becomes blocked. Your heart can't get enough oxygen. If blood flow is not restored quickly, the heart muscle will begin to die.

**A heart attack is not the same as cardiac arrest, which happens when your heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating. A heart attack can cause sudden cardiac arrest.**

Most heart attacks are caused by coronary artery disease. Your age, lifestyle habits, and other medical conditions can raise your risk of a heart attack. Not all heart attacks begin with the sudden and crushing chest pain that comes when the blood flow to heart gets blocked. Heart attack symptoms can start slowly and can be mild or more serious and sudden. Symptoms also may come and go over several hours. The symptoms of a heart attack can be different from person to person and different between men and women. If you've already had a heart attack, your symptoms may not be the same for another one.







## Heart Attack Signs and Symptoms in Men and Women

If you are having a heart attack, you may experience one or more of the symptoms below.

### Heart Attack

Signs and symptoms in women and men



-  Chest pain or discomfort
-  Shortness of breath
-  Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, back, arm, or shoulder
-  Feeling nauseous, light-headed or unusually tired



**It is also possible to have mild symptoms or even no symptoms at all and still have a heart attack.**

If you think you or someone else may be having a heart attack,  
**Take 325 mg of Aspirin and Call 9-1-1 right away.**

An ambulance is the best and safest way to get to the hospital. Do not drive to the hospital or let someone else drive you. **Every minute matters. Never delay calling 9-1-1.**

# Silent Heart Attacks

Heart attacks can happen without any symptoms or with very mild symptoms. These are called silent heart attacks. Silent heart attacks are more common in older adults and in people who have high blood sugar or diabetes.

## Heart Attacks in Women

Risk factors such as age, lifestyle habits, and other health conditions affect men and women differently.

- Women may get heart attacks at older ages than men do.
- Smoking, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, high blood sugar, obesity, and stress raise the risk of a heart attack more in women than in men.
- Women are more likely than men to have heart attacks that are not caused by coronary artery disease. This can make it more difficult for healthcare providers to diagnose heart attacks in women.
- Women have more health problems after having a heart attack than men do.

## Pregnancy and Heart Attacks

- Heart attacks are not common among pregnant women, but they are possible both during and soon after delivery. Normal changes to your body during pregnancy can raise your risk of a heart attack. Your age, lifestyle habits, and other health conditions, such as bleeding disorders, obesity, preeclampsia external link (high blood pressure during pregnancy), and diabetes, can also raise your risk.
- If you already have coronary artery disease, being pregnant can raise your risk of a heart attack. Coronary artery disease is a major cause of heart attacks during pregnancy. Ask your doctor whether it is safe for you to get pregnant and what steps you need to take to keep your heart healthy during your pregnancy.
- Heart attacks caused by spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD), a coronary artery embolus, or a coronary artery spasm are more common in pregnant women than in people who are not pregnant.

## Meth Use and Heart Attacks

**Methamphetamine and Meth related heart disease is a huge problem in Mendocino County.**

**Methamphetamine and Cocaine use disorders are a strong risk for heart disease.**

If you think you or someone else may be having a heart attack,  
Take 325 mg of Aspirin and Call 9-1-1 right away.

An ambulance is the best and safest way to get to the hospital. Do not drive to the hospital or let someone else drive you. **Every minute matters. Never delay calling 9-1-1.**