

Know the Warning Signs of a Heart Attack

The number-one symptom for men and women is often chest pain or discomfort

- At least 70 percent of men and women feel chest pain or discomfort when having a heart attack. “When we see people having heart attacks on TV, they grip their chests in excruciating pain,” says Deb Sundlof, D.O., Lehigh Valley Hospital and Health Network cardiologist. “In reality, many people say it doesn’t feel like chest *pain*; it feels like chest *discomfort*.”
- Beyond chest pain or discomfort, both men and women share the same symptoms and can mistake them for other illnesses. “Both have confused indigestion and stomach pain for a gastrointestinal problem when they’re having a heart attack,” Sundlof says.
- Although men and women can experience the same symptoms, some are more likely to occur in women than men.
- Discomfort, pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back
- Chest discomfort or pain that is brought on by exertion or physical stress
- Discomfort or pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck or arms
- Chest discomfort or pain with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath (more likely in women)
- Unexplained indigestion, heartburn or gas-like pains (more likely in women)
- Unexplained extreme fatigue (more likely in women)
- Chest discomfort or pain brought on by emotion, stress or occurring at night (more likely in women)
- Discomfort or pain across the shoulder blades (more likely in women)



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For more information
or for a physician referral,
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If You're Having a Heart Attack

If you have ANY of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately and chew and swallow an aspirin tablet. Listen to your body. The sooner you get help, the better.

When you call 9-1-1 and when you arrive at the emergency room, be clear and direct. Say, “I think I’m having a heart attack.” No one in the ambulance or at the emergency room will make you feel embarrassed if it is not a heart attack.