



Q: Heart attack signs?

A: A heart attack occurs when blood flow to the heart gets cut off. Any part of the heart muscle not receiving blood flow can be permanently damaged without a quick response. The signs of this medical emergency vary from person to person and may be absent, mild or severe. Some of the most common symptoms include:

- Pain in your chest or arms that feels like pressure, tightness, squeezing, crushing or aching.
- Pain that radiates to your neck, jaw or back.
- Nausea or indigestion.
- Shortness of breath.
- Dizziness or palpitations.
- Sweating or fatigue.

If you have any of the above symptoms, even if they're mild, or you suspect you're having a heart attack, call 911 immediately. Symptoms can be minimal, especially in women. The sooner you get medical treatment (preferably within 2 hours after symptoms start), the greater your chances of surviving a heart attack. Medications and sometimes surgery may be lifesaving.

— Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP