



# Am I Having a Heart Attack?

## How do I know if I am having a heart attack?

You may be having a heart attack if you feel **any** of these symptoms:

- Chest discomfort or pain which lasts longer than 5 minutes AND is not relieved by rest or nitroglycerin AND feels like any of the following:
  - pressure
  - tightness
  - squeezing
  - crushing
  - intense burning
  - aching

In addition to the symptoms above, you may also have

- pain radiating to your
  - back
  - shoulder
  - neck
  - jaw/teeth
  - arm
  - wrist
- shortness of breath
- dizziness
- fainting
- nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
- vomiting (throwing up)
- unusual weakness
- rapid and/or irregular heartbeat
- sense of coming doom

The more boxes you check, the more likely it is that you are having a heart attack. There may be other explanations for your chest pain, but it is important to get medical help.

This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your physician or other health care professional. If you have persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your doctor.

## DON'T DELAY!

If you are having a heart attack, getting medical attention right away can save your life!

Getting medical care within one hour of your heart attack can lower the amount of heart muscle damaged.

Your symptoms may come on slowly. They may be mild or unclear. They may start and stop irregularly.

- If you have angina, your heart attack symptoms may feel like your angina, but heart attack symptoms can be stronger or last longer.
- If you have had a heart attack before, it may feel the same or it could feel different.

## What should I do?

1. **Stop** what you are doing.
2. Sit or lie down.
3. *If your doctor has prescribed nitroglycerin for you, place one nitroglycerin tablet under your tongue.*
  - Let it dissolve. Do not chew or swallow the pill.
  - If your symptoms are **not** relieved in 3–5 minutes by nitroglycerin and rest, take another tablet and call 911 emergency services before you call anyone else.\*
  - While you wait for the ambulance, you can continue to put one nitroglycerin tablet under your tongue every 5 minutes until your symptoms are relieved or until the ambulance arrives.

*If you do not have your nitroglycerin with you or your doctor has not prescribed it, call 911 emergency services before you call anyone else.\**
4. Do not drive yourself.
5. If you do not already take daily aspirin and are not allergic, chew one adult-strength (325mg), uncoated aspirin tablet if you have it.

\*If you have an emergency medical condition, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

An emergency medical condition is (1) a medical or psychiatric condition that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that you could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in serious jeopardy to your health or body functions or organs; or (2) active labor when there isn't enough time for safe transfer to a Plan hospital (or designated hospital) before delivery, or if transfer poses a threat to your (or your unborn child's) health and safety.