



Heart Attacks Safety Talk

February is American Heart Month, a time when people can focus on their cardiovascular health. Each year there are 735,000 Americans who suffer heart attacks, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Out of that number, 525,000 of them are first-time heart attack victims. Heart disease and heart attacks are an unfortunate reality in our country. There is a good chance that sometime in your lifetime, you will witness someone suffer from a heart attack, or you yourself will be a victim.

It is important to know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. It is equally important to know what to do if someone around you is having a heart attack. Recognizing an emergency and getting the individual the proper care quickly can mean the difference between life and death.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A HEART ATTACK

In movies and television, we often see a person turn completely white and begin to clutch their chest when they are having a heart attack. While this could be the case in real life, it often is not. Many of the signs and symptoms of a heart attack are much more subtle. Here are some of the signs the CDC lists on their website:

- Chest pain or discomfort.
- Upper body pain or discomfort in the arms, back, neck, jaw, or upper stomach.
- Shortness of breath.
- Nausea, lightheadedness, or cold sweats.

Not all of these have to be present to be a heart attack. Pay attention to your body and what it is telling you. If you think you or someone around you is displaying heart attack symptoms, do not brush them off.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE HAS A HEART ATTACK

- Call 911. Even if it ends up not being a heart attack, it is truly better to be safe than sorry. Getting the proper medical attention quickly for a heart attack victim is their best chance to live.
- Try to keep the person calm, and have them sit or lie down.
- Have the person take an aspirin as long as they are not allergic and are conscious to do so.
- If the person stops breathing, you or someone else who is qualified should perform Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). If you don't know CPR, the 911 operator can assist you until the emergency medical services (EMS) personnel arrive.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A HEART ATTACK

Take heart attack symptoms seriously. We know most of the people we work with pretty well. If something seems wrong, talk to the person or get a supervisor involved. Know what the emergency response plan at your worksite for a medical emergency like a heart attack. Knowing who to call, what the address of the worksite is, and who is CPR trained on-site can save the victim's life.

To help prevent heart disease, you can:

- Eat healthy.
- Get active.
- Stay at a healthy weight.
- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke.
- Control your cholesterol and blood pressure.
- Drink alcohol only in moderation.
- Manage stress.

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SAFETY: FIRST. LAST. ALWAYS!