

Understanding heart attacks: What you need to know

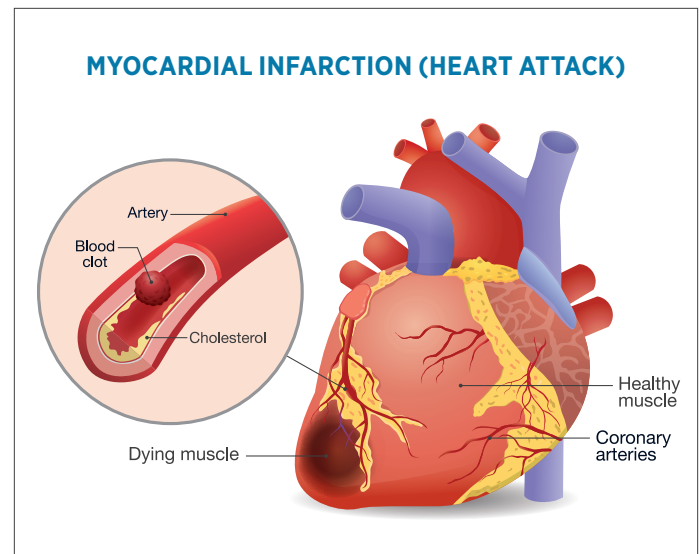
A heart attack (also called a myocardial infarction) occurs when blood flow to part of the heart is blocked, often by a buildup of plaque (fat, cholesterol and other substances) in the arteries. Without blood flow, the heart muscle can become damaged.

WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

Call 911 **right away** if you or someone else has any of these symptoms:

- Chest pain, pressure, tightness, burning, or discomfort
- Shortness of breath (with or without chest discomfort)
- Pain in the arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Cold sweat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Feeling unusually tired or fatigued

NOTE: Symptoms may be different for men and women.



WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If you think you're having a heart attack:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Do not drive yourself to the hospital.

HOW ARE HEART ATTACKS TREATED?

Treatment depends on how quickly you receive care and how severe the blockage is. It may include:

- Medications (blood thinners, pain relievers, etc.)
- Angioplasty or stenting (to open blocked arteries)
- Heart surgery (such as bypass surgery)
- Cardiac rehabilitation
- Lifestyle changes and regular doctor follow-up

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PREVENTING A FUTURE HEART ATTACK

You can lower your risk of having another heart attack by:

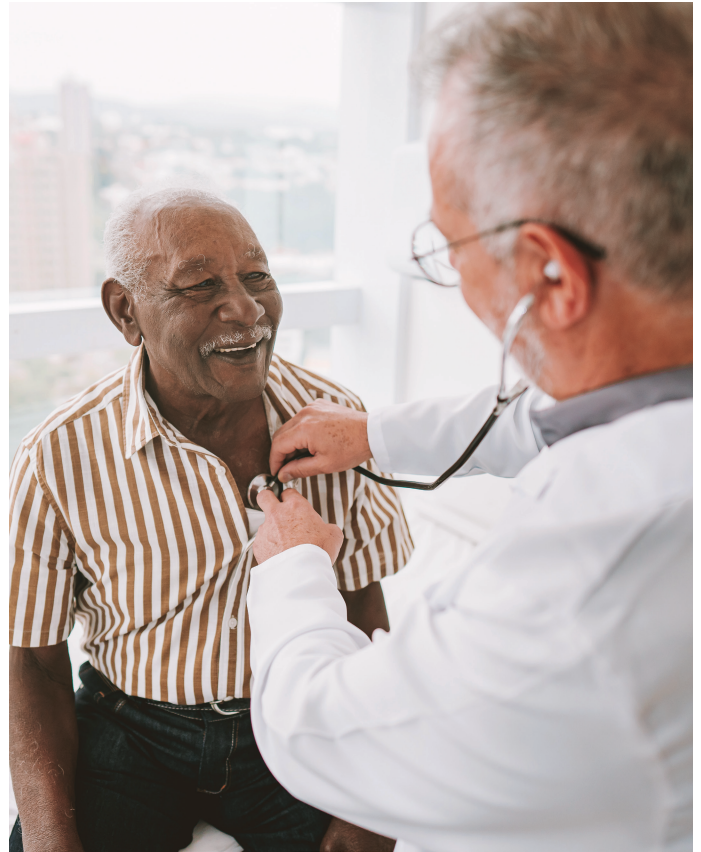
- Eating a heart-healthy diet
- Getting regular physical activity
- Quitting smoking
- Managing stress
- Limiting alcohol
- Keeping blood pressure and cholesterol under control
- Managing diabetes if you have it
- Seeing your doctor regularly

RISK FACTORS YOU CAN MANAGE

Certain factors can increase your risk of a heart attack. Work with your healthcare team to manage:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Inactivity
- Poor diet
- Stress
- Excessive alcohol use

Family history of heart disease can also raise your risk — talk to your doctor about your personal risk.



THE IMPORTANCE OF FOLLOW-UP CARE

After a heart attack, regular checkups and following your doctor's advice are essential for recovery and long-term health.

THIS INFORMATION IS FOR EDUCATION ONLY.
If you think you're having a heart attack, **always call 911.**

