

Because You are in My Heart.

It's easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle and forget to look out for yourself, ourselves.

I want to share something with you that can help protect both of us.

If you promise to give this a read, I promise to look out for you or anyone else we know if what we learn here happens.

Thank you.

Holidays Bring Highest Rates of Fatal Heart Attacks

Knowing the Symptoms Could Save a Life

Of all times of the year to know the symptoms of a <u>heart attack</u>, Christmas and New Year's Day may be the most important. That's because research has shown that **more people die from heart attack on these two holidays**, **plus the day after Christmas**, **than other days of the year**.

Researchers aren't sure why. Theories include the impact of cold weather, the stress associated with holiday festivities, or the tendency to indulge with decadent food and drink while celebrating. Another theory is that people may ignore or shrug off the warning signs. With the holidays at their high points – presents being unwrapped, kisses under the mistletoe, and the countdown to the new year – who wants to take a trip to the hospital? Plus, it's easy to put off the less recognized symptoms of nausea or back pain as the consequences of a heavy meal or lugging around heavy packages a la Santa.

Beware this very human tendency toward denial. **Know the symptoms of heart attack and take them seriously,** if you or someone you're with feels any of the following:

 Chest discomfort: Many heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.

- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body:** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Feeling nauseous or lightheaded

Here's a key thing to remember about a common misconception: **Not all people with heart attacks experience chest pain.** Be on the alert for *all* of the symptoms of heart attack.

Heart Attack Survival Guide

Recognizing the symptoms of a heart attack is step 1 for survival, but there's more to know. When a heart attack strikes, **seconds really do count.** If you have symptoms of a heart attack that come on suddenly and last for more than a few minutes (even if they come and go), or you feel terrible and different than you ever have before when experiencing indigestion, anxiety, or stress, here's what you must do:

- 1. **Get help immediately. Call 911.** Tell the 911 operator, "I think I'm having a heart attack." Or if you're calling for someone else, communicate the same thing about him or her.
- 2. Do not drive yourself to the hospital. Leave the driving to emergency personnel. You must be transported and receive treatment as quickly as possible, perhaps even while you are en route to the hospital. The emergency responders in the ambulance will notify the interventional cardiologist that you are coming. They'll have the <u>cardiac catheterization laboratory</u> ready for an interventional procedure, such as <u>angioplasty and stenting</u>.
- 3. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself. When you talk to the 911 operator, the paramedics, and any other healthcare professionals, say "I think I'm having a heart attack." This is especially important for women, whose heart attack symptoms are sometimes milder and more easily dismissed, even by healthcare professionals.
- 4. **Don't let anyone talk you out of what you believe your body is telling you.** Don't hesitate to request a thorough cardiac examination.

If the healthcare professionals determine you are having a heart attack, they will move swiftly to get you treated. In most cases, this means getting to a hospital where interventional cardiologists are on call 24/7 to treat heart attacks and other emergencies. The interventional cardiologists and their teams will take you to the cardiac catheterization laboratory, where they will use small tubes called **catheters** to locate the artery in your heart where blood isn't flowing freely. Once they've found the

blocked artery, they'll inflate a tiny balloon on the tip of the catheter to push aside the material blocking blood flow to your heart. This procedure, called **angioplasty** (or percutaneous coronary intervention), has been shown to the most effective therapy for saving lives during a heart attack.

We can't repeat it often enough. In a heart attack, seconds count. You may have heard the expression "time is muscle." This refers to the time that elapses between when a heart attack starts and when the interventional cardiologist restores blood flow to the heart. During that time, the heart muscle is in peril, which means your life is in danger. This is why it is so important to recognize the symptoms of a heart attack, take them seriously, and seek help promptly.

Here is a special website link for you to use on your Facebook page, Twitter or for email that comes right to this page on SecondsCount.org. Please share it. http://bit.ly/BecauseYouareinMyHeart