

Heart attack? Know the symptoms ... and what to do

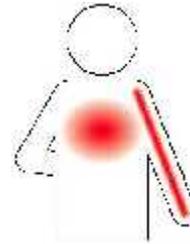
A heart attack is when a part of the heart muscle suddenly loses its blood supply. This is usually due to coronary heart disease.

The symptoms of a heart attack

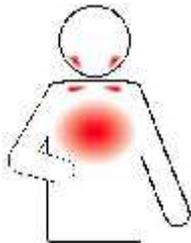


Pain or discomfort in the chest that doesn't go away.

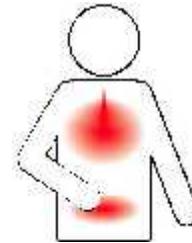
The pain may spread to the left or right arm



The pain



or may spread to the neck and jaw



You may feel sick or short of breath

Get the person to sit in a comfortable position, stay with them and keep them calm. If the person is not allergic to aspirin, give them an adult aspirin tablet (300mg) to chew if there is one easily available. If you don't have an aspirin next to you, or if you don't know if the person is allergic to aspirin, just get him or her to stay resting until the ambulance arrives.

What to do if you get chest pain

The information below is for people who already have coronary heart disease and who are taking GTN (glyceryl trinitrate) spray or tablets for their angina symptoms.

As you already have coronary heart disease, you may get chest pain or discomfort now and then. Sometimes this will be angina, which you will be able to manage at home with your GTN. However, it could also be a symptom of a heart attack. This is what to do.

- 1 Stop what you are doing.
- 2 Sit down and rest.
- 3 Use your GTN spray or tablets. Take the GTN as your doctor or nurse has told you. The pain should ease after a few minutes. If it doesn't, take your GTN again.
- 4 If the pain does not ease within a few minutes of taking the GTN the second time, call 108 immediately.
- 5 If you're not allergic to aspirin, chew an adult aspirin tablet (300mg) if there is one easily available. If you don't have an aspirin next to you, or if you don't know if you are allergic to aspirin, just stay resting until the ambulance arrives.

If you have symptoms that do not match the ones we have described above, but you think that you are having a heart attack, call 108 immediately.