



DCH

DECATUR COUNTY HOSPITAL

Early Heart Attack Care (EHAC)

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- ▶ Decatur County Hospital is seeking a Chest Pain Center Accreditation from the American College of Cardiology.
- ▶ DCH will be the ONLY Critical Access Hospital in Iowa, and only the 4th hospital in Iowa to receive this designation.
- ▶ Part of the certification process is educating our community on recognizing the early signs of a heart attack.





Major Themes

- ▶ Heart attacks have beginnings. Symptoms can begin about two weeks prior to a major event. This is the window of opportunity to prevent death and minimize heart damage.
- ▶ Every year, approximately 805,000 Americans have a heart attack.
- ▶ If you suspect someone is having a heart attack, get them to medical care as soon as possible.

Early Warning Signs

SPECIFIC HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS (PRODROMAL ANGINA)

- ▶ Chest discomfort
- ▶ Chest pressure
- ▶ Chest ache
- ▶ Chest burning
- ▶ Chest fullness

NON-SPECIFIC HEART ATTACK SYMPTOMS

- ▶ Weakness
- ▶ Sweating
- ▶ Nausea
- ▶ Dizziness

These mild symptoms may indicate the onset of a heart attack. They may come and go for hours or days before the chest pain becomes severe. Early symptoms are called prodromal and can be likened to the prodromal symptoms of a cold. When treated early, prevention can take place to avert sudden death and cardiac damage. *Early recognition and response saves lives.*



What do we know about heart attacks?

Heart attacks are the number one killer of the adult population in the United States. According to recent statistics:

- ▶ Every year approximately 805,000 Americans have a heart attack.
- ▶ Of these, 605,000 are a first heart attack and 200,000 happen in people who have already had a heart attack.
- ▶ Almost 50% may be unaware or don't act on early warning signs.

Can I reduce my heart attack risk?

Yes, learn the risk factors and modify your lifestyle to reduce the chance of heart disease. Some of the risk factors include:

- ▶ A family history of cardiovascular disease
- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ Overweight or obese
- ▶ Sedentary lifestyle
- ▶ Using tobacco products
- ▶ Metabolic disease, diabetes or other illnesses
- ▶ For women it can also include birth control pills, a history of pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes or having a low birth weight baby





Causes of heart attacks

- ▶ What causes a heart attack and why do people die?
- ▶ What causes a blockage?
- ▶ Why is there chest pain?

Can heart attack symptoms be different for men vs women?

Yes. Although there is some debate on this topic, please be aware of these possible signs and seek medical care.

- ▶ Men may normally feel pain and numbness in the left arm or the side of the chest. In women, these symptoms may appear on the right side.
- ▶ Women may experience unexplained exhaustion, or feel drained, dizzy or nauseous.
- ▶ Women may feel upper back pain that travels up into their jaw.
- ▶ Women may think their stomach pain is the flu, heartburn or an ulcer.

Other signs are called "atypical presentations." The individual may not complain of chest pressure, but may feel:

- ▶ Pain that spreads above the jawbone or into the lower body.
- ▶ Difficult or labored breathing.

What are the types (or "stages") of heart attacks and how can I help?

There are actually three presentations of a heart attack and if you are the first person upon the scene, you are the first responder. You are the Good Samaritan who performs Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), calls 9-1-1, deploys an Automated External Defibrillator (AED), or convinces the individual to get medical help as soon as possible.

- ▶ **Type 1:** The heart attack stops you dead in your tracks. This is called the CPR scene. In this first type of heart attack, call 9-1-1 and immediately begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Remember - push hard, push fast.
- ▶ **Type 2:** A heart attack where early damage is taking place. The patient is experiencing the Mack truck sitting on his chest. Call 9-1-1 to summon help. Keep the patient calm because they are usually weak and do not put up much of a fuss as they are in severe pain.
- ▶ **Type 3:** The heart attack is just beginning and EHAC provides a beneficial impact. This is the most difficult time to get someone to seek medical care. The individual will complain, but then excuse it as food poisoning or gas. The individual has minimal symptoms but is practicing maximum deniability. The patient-to-first-responder interaction can be frustrating. The individual tries to ignore it.

At this point, the individual can convince the first responder to contribute to the denial. Even paramedics find it difficult to convince a conscious patient to go to the hospital.

Why Don't People Seek Immediate Medical Care?



The individual may not perceive the mild discomfort as life-threatening. **Mild symptoms are easy to ignore.** We hope the discomfort will just go away.



People may confuse the early warning signs of heart attack with heartburn or indigestion and self-medicate.



First responders or bystanders may be easily swayed by the **denial of the person.**



People may not understand the importance of a quick response. **They may not know that the majority of damage may take place in the first two hours of a heart attack.**



People may be concerned that their mild symptoms are "not important" or the attention is "unwarranted."

The mild pain is easily ignored by the victim and others because:

The symptoms are mild.

The onset of pain might not be noticeable.

There is a strong tendency to continue business as usual.

In some cases, there are no risk factors.

The person is seldom ill and feels indestructible.

The person needs to feel in control.

The person is worried about what others will think.

Overcoming a Person's Reluctance

The following are strategies to overcome denial and resistance to medical attention:

Find out the most critical issue on the person's mind. Offer to take care of that concern yourself or have someone else do it.

Suggest that the individual check out any early symptoms, no matter how mild they may seem.

If the person is anxious regarding a spouse or family member, offer to call them.

Enlist family members or co-workers to help you.

Try to relieve tension with appropriate humor.

Be personal and persistent. Sit and talk - don't walk away.

Congratulate the victim on his or her good judgment: "Great! Let's just get it checked."



Overcoming a Person's Reluctance

When a person asks, “Why call 9-1-1?”

EMT’s know what to do in order to save a life. Many ambulances are equipped with life-saving machines and medications that can diagnose a heart attack and stimulate the heart in case it stops.

In communities throughout the USA, ambulances can activate a heart attack alert while they are on the way to the hospital. These facilities then activate their staff in order to provide immediate care upon arrival.

Overcoming a Person's Reluctance



**It`s
Quiz
Time**



EHAC Quiz

Question 1

- ▶ If a friend, co-worker or spouse confides in you that they are experiencing mild symptoms of a heart attack, how would you respond?
 - A. Tell them it is probably indigestion and advise them to take some Tums.
 - B. Encourage their denial because you are too busy.
 - C. Tell them that they are probably suffering from a gall bladder attack or a hiatal hernia.
 - D. Show concern and ask them if they have experienced these symptoms before.

Answer: D

EHAC Quiz

Question 2

- ▶ What questions should you ask the person experiencing early heart attack symptoms?
 - A. Is the discomfort, tightness, pressure, or pain located in the center of the chest?
 - B. Are the symptoms present in the chest, throat, jaw, upper back or inside of the left arm?
 - C. Did these symptoms come on with exertion and do they go away with rest?
 - D. All of the above

Answer: D

EHAC Quiz

Question 3

- ▶ If the person answers yes to your questions, how should you respond?
 - A. Expect denial by the person if the symptoms are minimal; look for the most critical issue and take charge.
 - B. Explain to this individual that they may be experiencing the earliest symptoms of a possible heart attack.
 - C. Encourage this individual to get these symptoms checked out at the nearest Heart Attack Care Center/Emergency Room.
 - D. Call 911 or assist the individual to the nearest Heart Attack Care Center/Emergency Room.
 - E. All of the above

Answer: E

EHAC Quiz

Question 4

- ▶ What are the possible presentations of a heart attack?
 - A. Cardiac Arrest
 - B. Severe chest pain
 - C. Central chest pressure, ache or burning sensation
 - D. All of the above

Answer: D

EHAC Quiz

Question 5

- ▶ Which of these responses can help to save a life?
 - A. Perform Hands Only CPR
 - B. Call 9-1-1
 - C. Seek Early Medical Care for the Chest Pressure, Ache, or Burning Sensation
 - D. Deploy an AED
 - E. All of the above

Answer: E

EHAC Quiz

Question 6

- ▶ At what stage can a threatening heart attack possibly be avoided (prevented)?
 - A. At the Cardiac Arrest Stage
 - B. When the Chest Pain is Crushing and Severe
 - C. At the Mild Onset of Chest Discomfort

Answer: C

EHAC Quiz

Question 7

- ▶ Approximately how many people have a heart attack in the USA each year?
 - A. 805,000
 - B. 60,000
 - C. 6,000

Answer: A

EHAC Quiz

Question 8

- ▶ Early chest discomfort occurs in approximately what percentage of people with heart attacks?
 - A. 50%
 - B. 20%
 - C. 5

Answer: A

EHAC Quiz

Question 9

- ▶ Approximately how many heart attacks are considered a first heart attack in the USA each year?
 - A. 605,000
 - B. 25,000
 - C. 210,000

Answer: A

EHAC Quiz

Question 10

- ▶ What does the acronym EHAC stand for?
 - A. Evolving Heart Attack Care
 - B. Early Heart Attack Care
 - C. Emergency Heart Attack Care

Answer: B

EHAC Pledge

“I understand that heart attacks have beginnings that may include chest discomfort, shortness of breath and/ or arm pain, and weakness. These may occur hours or weeks before the actual heart attack. I solemnly swear that if it happens to me or anyone I know, I will call 9-1-1 and activate our Emergency Medical Services.”



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An Affiliate of **MERCYONE.**

Questions?

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