

# Know the warning signs of heart attack and stroke

You could save your life



Heart attack and stroke are life-or-death emergencies — every second counts. If you think you or someone you're with has any symptoms of heart attack or stroke, call 911 immediately.

For a stroke, also note the time when the first symptom(s) appeared. A clot-busting drug received within 3 to 4.5 hours of the start of symptoms may improve your chances of getting better faster.

## Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. The warning signs are:

-  • Chest discomfort. Most 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.
-  • Shortness of breath. This may occur with or without chest discomfort.
-  • 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.
-  • Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

## Stroke Warning Signs

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, or trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness or loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

The acronym F.A.S.T. is an easy way to recognize and respond to the sudden warning signs of stroke. The letters stand for:

-  • **Face drooping** — Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop or is it numb?
-  • **Speech difficulty** — Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence such as, "The sky is blue." Is the sentence repeated correctly? Are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand?
-  • **Arm weakness** — Ask the person to raise both arms. Is one arm weak or numb? Does one arm drift downward?
-  • **Time to call 911** — If the person shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 911 and get them to the hospital immediately.

The American Heart Association and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute are working together for women, for healthy hearts.

[GoRedForWomen.org](http://GoRedForWomen.org)



# WOMEN need CPR, too!

But women receive **bystander CPR** in public settings **less often** than men do.

## HERE'S Why:

Even in training environments, some people are less likely to use **CPR** or an **AED** on female manikins.

**Fears:** Many are afraid of being accused of inappropriate touching or causing physical injury.

**Myths:** Many believe that women are less likely to have heart problems.



## Here's what the American Heart Association is doing:



**RAISING AWARENESS**  
about cardiac arrest in women.



**IMPROVING TRAINING**  
to address gender-related barriers to increase bystander CPR rates for women. This includes representation of women in our training materials and informational videos.



**ADVOCATING**  
to improve the response to cardiac arrest for everyone. (All states have Good Samaritan laws that protect anyone who gives first aid and CPR. Check the laws in your area.)



## Here's what you can do:

- ✓ **Overcome fear** — it may help you save a life.
- ✓ **Scan the QR Code** to watch a video on how to perform Hands-Only CPR.
- ✓ **Learn more at [goredforwomen.org/WomenandCPR](https://goredforwomen.org/WomenandCPR)**

