

Patient Information about Heart Attack

<http://www.cardiologychannel.com/patient-information-heart-attack/index.shtml>

Heart attack, also called cardiac arrest and acute myocardial infarction, occurs when blood flow to the heart is partially or completely blocked, resulting in the death of heart tissue. Heart attack is a medical emergency that can cause brain damage and death within minutes. Cardiovascular disease (also called heart disease, atherosclerosis, or coronary artery disease), diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol, increase the risk for heart attack.

Anyone who experiences or witnesses heart attack warning signs and symptoms, such as squeezing pain or pressure in the chest or chest pain that spreads to the shoulder, arm, or jaw, should seek **immediate medical attention**. Prompt medical treatment may improve the chances for recovery and survival after a heart attack.

Here are some questions for heart attack patients and their families and caregivers to ask about heart attacks and heart attack treatment. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like answered, and take it with you to your next doctor appointment. The more information you have about heart attack, the easier it is to make important medical decisions.

Questions to Ask Your Doctor about Heart Attack

- What makes you suspect that I or my family member has had a heart attack?
- Is my or my family member's condition stable? If not, what type of initial heart attack treatment do you recommend?
- What are the benefits, risks and possible complications associated with these medications and/or procedures?
- What kinds of examinations and tests will be performed to evaluate the severity of the condition?
- What do these heart attack tests involve?
- What are the benefits, risks, side effects, and possible complications associated with these tests?
- How quickly do you expect to have the test results?
- What do the results of the tests indicate?
- What is the severity of my or my family member's condition?

- Can you recommend sources for additional information about care following heart attack?
- What are the warning signs of heart attack complications?
- What should I do if I or my family member experiences these symptoms? **Telephone number to call:**
- What kind of assistance or help at home might I or my family member need?
- How do I arrange for these services?
- Which long-term heart attack medication(s) do you recommend?
- What are the benefits, risks, and possible side effects associated with these heart attack medications?
- What should I do if serious side effects develop? **Telephone number to call:**
- How long might this medication be necessary?
- Can you recommend a local or online support group for heart attack patients and their families and caregivers?
- Can you recommend any additional resources for heart attack information?
- Do you recommend participation in a clinical trial for heart attack patients? Why or why not?

Notes/Additional Information