

Is it a Heart Attack or A Stroke?

Knowing the signs of a heart attack or stroke can help you to act quickly in the event of an emergency and save someone's life. Every second matters when it comes to a heart attack or stroke, so dialing 911 at the early onset of symptoms is important. Realize that not all heart attacks and strokes will present the same symptoms in everyone, but if you suspect a heart attack or stroke it is important to seek help, it is better to be safe than sorry. Many heart attacks begin slowly with minor pain and discomfort before they turn into what we would often picture as a heart attack. Here are a few signs that may point to a heart attack, which is when the blood flow to the heart is interrupted.

- Chest discomfort that may last a few minutes or comes and goes. It may feel like a pressure of fullness or pain.
- Discomfort in other areas of the body including one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath may occur with or without other symptoms.
- Cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

Symptoms of cardiac arrest, which is when the heart no longer pumps blood around the body, may occur suddenly and without warning. Symptoms include:

- Sudden loss of responsiveness.
- No sign of normal breathing.

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to the brain is interrupted. Warning signs include:

- Sudden numbness, weakness, or paralysis of the face, arm or leg. It usually occurs on only one side of the body.
- Sudden trouble seeing out of one or both eyes.
- Sudden confusion or difficulty speaking and understanding.
- Sudden difficulty walking, dizziness, and loss of balance or coordination.
- Quick onset of a severe headache.

The most important thing you can do if you think you or someone around you is experiencing a heart attack or stroke is to act quickly. Dial 911 so that treatment may begin before irreversible damage occurs.

For more information on the warning signs of a heart attack and stroke, please visit: www.heart.org