

BETTER HEALTH 4 YOU

SMART LOCAL 36 BENEFIT FUND

BLOOD PRESSURE, CHOLESTEROL, HEART

WARNING SIGNS FOR A HEART ATTACK

Men vs. Women

Am I having a heart attack?

We've all seen the movie scenes where a man gasps, clutches his chest and falls to the ground. In reality, a heart attack victim could easily be a woman, and the scene may not be that dramatic.

"Although men and women can experience chest pressure that feels like an elephant sitting across the chest, women can experience a heart attack without chest pressure," said Nieca Goldberg, M.D., medical director for the Joan H. Tisch Center for Women's Health at NYU's Langone Medical Center and an American Heart Association volunteer. "Instead they may experience shortness of breath, pressure or pain in the lower chest or upper abdomen, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting, upper back pressure or extreme fatigue."

Even when the signs are subtle, the consequences can be deadly, especially if the victim doesn't get help right away.

'I thought I had the flu'

Even though heart disease is the No. 1 killer of women, women often chalk up the symptoms to less life-threatening conditions like acid reflux, the flu or normal aging.

"They do this because they are scared and because they put their families first," Goldberg said. "There are still many women who are shocked that they could be having a heart attack."

A heart attack strikes someone about every 34 seconds. It occurs when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart muscle is severely reduced or cut off completely. This happens because the arteries that supply the heart with blood can slowly narrow from a buildup of fat, cholesterol and other substances (plaque).

Many women think the signs of a heart attack are unmistakable — the image of the elephant comes to mind — but in fact they can be subtler and sometimes confusing.

You could feel so short of breath, "as though you ran a marathon, but you haven't made a move," Goldberg said.

Some women experiencing a heart attack describe upper back pressure that feels like squeezing or a rope being tied around them, Goldberg said. Dizziness, lightheadedness or actually fainting are other symptoms to look for.

HEART HEALTHY RECIPE

TUSCAN-STYLE GRILLED CHICKEN KEBABS

1 TSP. LEMON ZEST, ROSEMARY, & OREGANO

2 TBS. LIME JUICE

2 TSP. OLIVE OIL

2 CLOVE GARLIC, MINCED

¼ TSP. CRUSHED RED PEPPER

1 # BONELESS CHICKEN CUT INTO CUBES (16 PIECES)

GREEN BELL PEPPER (16 PIECES)

16 CHERRY TOMATOES

16 WHOLE BUTTON MUSHROOMS

MARINATE THE CHICKEN IN THE OIL AND ALL THE SEASONINGS (UP TO 8 HOURS). SOAK SKEWERS IN COLD WATER. ALTERNATE CHICKEN, MUSHROOMS, BELL PEPPERS AND TOMATOES. LIGHTLY SPRAY WITH COOKING SPRAY. GRILL ON MEDIUM 8-10 MINUTES (TURNING EVERY 2-3 MINUTES). SERVE WITH BROWN RICE.



SERVINGS: 4

CAL 213, FAT 2.5G, CHOL 66MG, SODIUM 16MG, CARB 16G, FIBER 3G, SUGAR 4G, PROTEIN 31G

"Many women I see take an aspirin if they think they are having a heart attack and never call 9-1-1," Goldberg said. "But if they think about taking an aspirin for their heart attack, they should also call 9-1-1."

Heart attack is the number one killer of both men and women in the U.S. Each year, about 1.1 million Americans suffer a heart attack, and 460,000 of these are fatal. Most of the deaths from heart attacks are caused by ventricular fibrillation of the heart that occurs before the victim of the heart attack can reach an emergency room. Those who reach the emergency room have an excellent prognosis; survival from a heart attack with modern treatment should exceed 90%. The 1% to 10% of heart attack victims who die later include those victims who suffer major damage to the heart muscle initially or who suffer additional damage at a later time. Fortunately, procedures such as coronary angiogram and PTCA (coronary balloon angioplasty), and clot dissolving drugs are available that can quickly open blocked arteries in order to restore circulation to the heart and limit heart muscle damage. In order to optimally benefit heart attack victims and limit the extent of heart damage, these treatments to open blocked arteries should be given early during a heart attack. Knowing the early warning signs of heart attack is critical for prompt recognition and treatment. Many heart attacks start slowly, unlike the dramatic portrayal often seen in the movies. A person experiencing a heart attack may not even be sure of what is happening. Heart attack symptoms vary among individuals, and even a person who has had a previous heart attack may have different

symptoms in a subsequent heart attack. Although chest pain or pressure is the most common symptom of a heart attack, heart attack victims may experience a diversity of **symptoms** that include:

- **pain, fullness, and/or squeezing sensation of the chest;**
- **jaw pain, toothache and/or headache**
- **shortness of breath**
- **nausea, vomiting, and/or general epigastric (upper middle abdomen) discomfort**
- **sweating**
- **heartburn and/or indigestion**
- **arm pain (more commonly the left arm, but may be either arm)**
- **upper back pain**
- **general malaise (vague feeling of illness)**
- **no symptoms (approximately one quarter of all heart attacks are silent, without chest pain or new symptoms and silent heart attacks are especially common among patients with diabetes mellitus).**

Even though the symptoms of a heart attack at times can be vague and mild, it is important to remember that heart attacks

producing no symptoms or only mild symptoms can be just as serious and life-threatening as heart attacks that cause severe chest pain. Too often patients attribute heart attack symptoms to "indigestion," "fatigue," or "stress," and consequently delay seeking prompt medical attention.

One cannot overemphasize the importance of seeking prompt medical attention in the presence of symptoms that suggest a heart attack.

Early diagnosis and treatment saves lives, and delays in reaching medical assistance can be fatal. A delay in treatment can lead to permanently reduced function of the heart due to more extensive damage to the heart muscle. Death also may occur as a result of the sudden onset of arrhythmias such as ventricular fibrillation.

What should you do if you experience these symptoms? Doctors agree that if you're in doubt, get checked out anyway.

Even if you're not sure if something is really wrong, you should call 9-1-1 if you experience heart attack symptoms.

Prompt administration of drugs can help restore circulation to the heart and increase your chances of survival.



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Call me anytime with questions

All information contained within this newsletter is intended for educational purposes only. Members should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something they may have read on this website. Information obtained from American Heart Association and MedicineNet.com.