

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

*Safety Tips:
Heart Attacks*

I believe this is a subject that never gets enough attention. So I choose to discuss it annually, even though we (within our university family) have been fortunate to escape a lot of coronary problems. A “heads up” on some issues is worthy of repeating annually.

Heart attacks or myocardial infarction is the #1 killer of men and women in the USA. According to statistics, approximately 735,000 Americans suffer a heart attack, and heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the USA. Most of the deaths are caused by ventricular fibrillation of the heart that occurs before the victim reaches the hospital. Those who reach the emergency room have an excellent prognosis, survival from a heart attack should exceed 90%. The 1-10% of heart attack victims who die later include those victims who suffer major damage to the heart muscle initially or suffer additional damage at a later time.

What is a Heart Attack?

Explaining a heart attack in medical language would take up more space than we have, so we shall summarize what it is.

A heart attack is an emergency that requires immediate medical attention.

The heart is a muscle. Blood carries vital oxygen and nutrients to the heart muscle, and without blood, the heart muscle begins to die. This is the reason that every second counts when it comes to heart attack treatment. An extensive blockage, especially in a major blood vessel, such as the left anterior descending artery, can cause a large heart attack. Large attacks that aren't treated early and aggressively can lead to heart failure. The risk of death within 5 years of being diagnosed with certain types of heart failure can be 50% or more, worse than many forms of cancer.

Symptoms of Heart Attacks-

Many heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts longer than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like:

~Uncomfortable pressure ~Squeezing
~Fullness or stabbing pain ~Chest discomfort

But not all heart attacks are preceded by chest pains!

~Discomfort on other parts of the body: both arms, back, neck, jaw and stomach

~Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort

~Pounding heart or changes in heart rhythm

~Heartburn, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain

~Breaking out in a cold sweat

~Dizziness or lightheadedness

Heart attack symptoms may be different in women: These heart attack symptoms are more common in women. They may occur without chest pain.

~Sudden onset of weakness ~Shortness of breath

~Nausea, vomiting, indigestion ~Body aches

~Overall feeling of illness ~Sleep disturbance

~Sweating ~Fatigue

✓ Unusual feeling or mild discomfort in the back, chest, arm, neck or jaw. (Remember this may occur without chest pain and still be a heart attack).

✓ People who have diabetes or are elderly may also experience atypical heart attack symptoms.

- ✓ If you or someone you are with experiences any of these symptoms get them help immediately. **Dial 9-1-1** to get to the hospital as soon as possible.
- ✓ If you can, **chew an uncoated aspirin tablet.** This can help slow blood clot formation while you wait for emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to arrive in an ambulance.

Tips to Aid in Heart Attack Prevention-

- Maintain a healthy diet
- Program for regular exercise
- No smoking
- Weight control
- Control high cholesterol
- Control high blood pressure

Cough /CPR=

The American Heart Association doesn't endorse the following procedure, but there are documented cases where this has aided in saving a life when used:

- During a sudden arrhythmia (abnormal heartbeat too), it may be possible for a conscious, responsive person to cough forcefully and maintain enough blood flow to the brain to remain conscious for a few seconds until the arrhythmia disappears or is treated.
- Blood flow is maintained by increased pressure in the chest that occurs during the forceful coughs. This procedure has been labeled as “Cough/CPR,” **although it is not a recognized form of traditional resuscitation.**
- The association further states that this method should not be taught in lay-rescuer classes. It only complicates the real method of CPR. In virtually all lay-rescuer CPR classes, the finding trait that signals an emergency is unresponsiveness. This signals the rescuer to start the A-B-C's of CPR. This technique has been effective in hospital settings during cardiac catheterization.
- In these cases, the ECG is monitored in the presence of a doctor. If arrhythmia is detected, a nurse will ask the patient to cough vigorously, and within 10 to 15 seconds, before the patient loses consciousness. The chance of arrhythmia leaving or the victim getting treated is much better.

The seriousness of a heart attack is judged by the amount of heart muscle that is permanently damaged. Your cardiologist will assess the damage through use of echocardiography. Treatment of a heart attack will depend on the type and severity of the heart attack.

If you are experiencing symptoms of a heart attack, dial 9-1-1. Every minute you delay, if it is a heart attack, could result in permanent heart muscle damage or increased risk of death.

**IF YOU HAVE A DOUBT ABOUT
YOU'RE HEART -
DON'T GAMBLE-HAVE IT
CHECKED OUT!**

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Written by: Ted Gordon
Excerpts: <http://secondscout.org/heart-conditions-centers>
[AmericanHeartAssociation.com](http://www.americanheart.org)
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