

Silent Heart Attack

A silent heart attack occurs without pain and often goes unnoticed. In fact, the person may not know they had a heart attack until they receive a diagnosis weeks or months later. Dr. Eduardo Marban, Executive Director at the Smidt Heart Institute at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, reported that it is not uncommon for a silent heart attack to be written off as indigestion, a sprained or strained muscle, fatigue, or “just feeling run down”.

Signs and Symptoms of a Silent Heart Attack

The signs and symptoms of a silent heart attack may be muted or confused with other conditions, so it is important to look out for the following:

- Shortness of breath
- Racing heart
- Excessive or prolonged fatigue
- A general feeling of unease or discomfort
- Sudden, profuse sweating
- Nausea or vomiting
- Lightheadedness or dizziness
- Jaw pain
- Discomfort or burning in the chest
- Pain in the back or arms that may feel like a sprained or pulled muscle
- Tingling down one or both arms



Causes of a Heart Attack

The majority of heart attacks occur due to ischemic heart disease (a condition that develops when there is a buildup of plaque in the coronary arteries). In some cases, a portion of plaque can break free and form a blood clot. The blood clot can grow and create a blockage that prevents blood from reaching the heart.

Although less common, a severe spasm or tightening of a coronary artery can lead to a heart attack. Experts do not know why the heart spasm stops blood from reaching the heart, but several factors may include exposure to extreme cold, stress, pain, smoking or the use of certain drugs.

Seeking Emergency Medical Attention

If you have heart attack symptoms, don't dismiss them as nothing or drive yourself (or wait for someone to drive you) to the hospital. It is always safest to call 911 if you have **any** of the following symptoms:

- Chest pains or other symptoms of a heart attack
- You know that you have heart disease and experience chest pain that doesn't go away
- You become very short of breath
- You think you may be experiencing a heart attack
- You think you may have lost consciousness

When you call 911, the dispatcher may advise you to chew a baby aspirin while you're waiting on emergency services. If you have nitroglycerin tablets, it is advised to follow your physician's directions related to nitroglycerin administration.

If you are with someone who is experiencing heart attack symptoms: Call 911; follow dispatcher directions related to aspirin and nitroglycerin; be prepared to perform CPR if you are CPR trained; and retrieve an AED if it is available. AED's are simple to use and walk you through step-by-step on how to apply the AED and if shock is advised. ***Shock will only occur if the persons condition indicates it is necessary.***

If you would like more information related to AED's contact your Risk Management Representative at Catholic Mutual Group.

<https://www.aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/info-2021/silent-heart-attack.html?cmp=KNC-DSO-COR-Health-HeartHealth-NonB>

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/silent-heart-attack#causes>

