

Heart attack: Know the warning signs

During this time of storm recovery, health officials urge the community, especially those individuals performing heavy physical activity, to be aware of the warning signs of a heart attack.

While some heart attacks are sudden and intense (as you may have seen on TV), many heart attacks start slowly, with only mild pain or discomfort. If you, or someone you are with, begin to have chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other signs of a heart attack, **call 911 right away**.

Warning signs of a heart attack include:

- **Chest pain or discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Pain or discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath** may occur before, with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs:** Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.

What to Do?

If you or someone you're with shows one or more of these signs, don't ignore them. **Call 911** to get medical help right away. Don't wait longer than a few minutes before calling for help.

Do not try to drive the victim to the hospital yourself – unless you have been told that help will be delayed. Calling 911 is the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment when they arrive – up to an hour sooner than if someone goes to the hospital by car. They are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. You will also get seen faster in the hospital if you come by ambulance.