

What is a heart attack?

A heart attack happens when there's a sudden restriction in the heart's blood supply.



Call
999

Help us
help you

What are the symptoms?

A heart attack can cause a variety of symptoms but most often:

- **Chest pain**, a sensation of pressure, heaviness, tightness or squeezing across the chest.
- **A feeling of unease**, like a panic attack.

Other symptoms may include pain spreading through the arms, jaw, neck, back or tummy, feeling lightheaded or dizzy, sweating, shortness of breath, feeling sick or being sick, coughing or wheezing.

Although the chest pain is often severe, some people may only experience minor pain, similar to indigestion. It's important to act **straight away**.

What to do?

Call 999 immediately

- If you think someone might be having a heart attack, call 999. Even if symptoms are mild, it's much better to **call straight away**. This is never wasting NHS time.

Give aspirin

- While waiting for an ambulance, it may help to chew and then swallow a tablet of aspirin (ideally 300mg). Only do this if it is within reach and you don't have to leave the person's side, and they are not allergic to aspirin.

Keep the person calm

- Lastly, try and calm the person down so they don't put strain on their heart.

It's never too early to call 999 and describe the symptoms.

Advice and support from the British Heart Foundation:

Further information:
bhf.org.uk/HeartAttackInfo

Practical support:
bhf.org.uk/PracticalSupport

Emotional support:
bhf.org.uk/EmotionalSupport