



Signs & Symptoms – Heart Attack, Angina, Stroke

Many illnesses may occur suddenly and become medical emergencies. You do not have to know for sure what the victim's specific illness is before you give first aid.

Heart attack:

A heart attack is a sudden reduced blood flow to the heart muscle. It is a medical emergency because it can lead to cardiac arrest. Heart attacks can occur at any age. Signs vary from vague chest discomfort to crushing pain, with or without other symptoms. A victim may have no symptoms at all before collapsing suddenly.

Facts about heart attacks:

- Half a million people a year in the United States die from heart attacks-many of whom could have been saved by prompt first aid and medical treatment.
- Heart attacks result from coronary artery disease, which can often be prevented or minimized with a healthy diet, exercise, not smoking and regular medical care.
- Heart attacks are more likely for those with a family history.
- One-fifth of heart attack victims do not have chest pain, but often have other symptoms.
- Heart attack victims typically deny they are having a heart attack. Do not let them talk you out of getting help!

Symptoms of heart attack include:

- Complaint of persistent chest pressure, tightness, ache, or pain
- Pain that spreads to the neck, shoulders, or arms
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness, light headedness, feeling of impending doom
- Pale moist skin, or heavy sweating
- Nausea

Angina is chest pain caused by heart disease which often occurs after intense activity or exertion. The pain usually lasts only a few minutes. Most people know when they have angina and may carry medication for it. Help a person with angina take his own medication and rest. If the pain persists for more than 10 minutes, stops, and then returns, or if the victim has other heart attack symptoms, give first aid as for a heart attack.

Stroke A stroke is an interruption of blood flow to a part of the brain, killing nerve cells and affecting brain function. A stroke victim needs medical help immediately to



decrease the chance of permanent damage. Strokes are more common in older adults. More than 700,000 Americans have strokes every year, resulting in more than 162,000 deaths. Symptoms of stroke include:

- Sudden, severe headache
- Sudden weakness or numbness of face, arm, or leg on one side
- Dizziness, confusion, difficulty understanding speech
- Difficulty speaking or swallowing, vision problems
- Changing levels of responsiveness or unresponsiveness

SAFETY REMINDER

Emotions can take over during an emergency. Fight through them and follow the Emergency Action Plan in place. You need to not only take care of the ill employee, but also those witnessing the scene.