

February: American Heart Month

Is It Heartburn or a Heart Attack?

The pain experienced during a heart attack and during a severe heartburn episode can be difficult to distinguish. It is not unusual for people to mistake symptoms of heart disease (such as angina and even a heart attack) for heartburn. Similarly, many people go to the emergency room each year out of fear that they are having a heart attack, only to find out they have severe heartburn. In fact, it often takes medical testing to make the determination. In addition to some similar symptoms, both heartburn and heart attacks are more likely to occur in people over the age of 40. Here are some possible differences between the two conditions

Possible Signs of Heartburn

- A sharp, burning sensation below the breastbone or ribs
- Burning sensation may move up toward the throat
- Pain usually does not radiate to the shoulders, arms, or neck
- Pain often occurs after eating, particularly when lying down
- Pain that increases when bending over, lying down, exercising, or lifting heavy object

Possible Signs of a Heart Attack

- A feeling of uncomfortable fullness, pressure, squeezing, tightness, or pain in the center of the chest that lasts for more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back
- Pain or discomfort that spreads to one or both arms, the back, stomach, neck, or jaw
- Pain often responds quickly to nitroglycerin
- Shortness of breath
- Other symptoms such as:
 - Breaking out in a cold sweat
 - Nausea
 - Lightheadedness
 - Fainting
 - Palpitations (feeling a rapid heart beat)

Seeking Medical Attention for Chest Pain

Chest pain can be difficult to interpret. Get emergency medical attention if you have any chest pain, especially if you have other signs and symptoms of a heart attack. A visit to the emergency room could save your life. Call 911 if you have any chest pain, even if you think it may be heartburn.

Source: Author: Amy Scholten, MPH
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Your Guide to Physical Activity & Your Heart

A NIH publication called *Your Guide to Physical Activity and Your Heart* has easy-to-understand information on the power of physical activity to keep you healthy.

The 44-page guide is full of practical tips, including simple ways you can incorporate physical activity into your everyday life. Experts recommend that all adults should be moderately active for at least 30 minutes per day on most days of the week. They recommend at least 60 minutes per day to help manage body weight and prevent unhealthy weight gain

Download this and other easy-to-read, science-based guides to improving your health for free at the site listed below.

Source: National Institutes of Health
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<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/>

Fast Facts

February is American Heart Month. Now is the time to make sure that you and your loved ones are following a heart-healthy lifestyle. You should also know the signs of heart attack, what to do about them, and how to talk to your health care provider about heart health.

- Each year over a million people in the United States have a heart attack. About half of them die.
- It's important to know the symptoms of a heart attack and call 9-1-1 if someone is having them. Symptoms include—chest discomfort, such as pressure, squeezing, or pain; shortness of breath; discomfort in the upper body, such as the arms, shoulder, neck, back; nausea, vomiting, dizziness, light-headedness, and sweating. Any symptoms that cause you concern should be checked with a health care professional as soon as possible.
- As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.
- Most attacks happen when a clot in the coronary artery blocks the supply of blood and oxygen to the heart. Often this leads to an irregular heartbeat—called an arrhythmia—that causes a severe decrease in the pumping function of the heart. If the blockage is not treated within a few hours, the affected heart muscle dies.
- Signs of heart attack in women are often very different from those associated with men (shortness of breath, tightening in the chest). If women of any age experience things like dizziness or discomfort in the upper body, they should immediately contact 9-1-1.

Source: National Institutes of Health MedLine Plus
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<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/winter09/articles/winter09pg23.html>

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Five Steps to a Healthier Heart

Expert offers simple lifestyle changes to keep cardiovascular disease at bay

Five simple steps can help lower your risk of heart disease, says a leading expert on preventive cardiology.

About 58 million Americans have heart disease and more needs to be done to educate people about risk factors and prevention, said Dr. Holly Anderson, director of education and outreach at the Ronald O. Perelman Heart Institute of New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

She offered the following heart health tips:

Know your numbers. Ask your doctor about what are considered normal numbers for blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides.

Start exercising. Walking for just 20 to 30 minutes a few days a week can reduce the risk of premature death by more than 50 percent. Physical activity reduces blood pressure, improves cholesterol, reduces stress, improves sleep, boosts mood, improves cognition and prevents memory loss.

Laugh. Just 15 minutes of laughter equals about 30 minutes of aerobic exercise in terms of cardiovascular health. Research has also linked laughter with reductions in pain and anxiety, health function of blood vessels, and increased levels of brain hormones that improve your mood.

Pay more attention to your waistline than your weight. The waistline is a better measurement of overall health than weight because the amount of fat around your waist is directly linked to high blood pressure and high cholesterol and can increase your risk of diabetes.

Get adequate sleep. Lack of sleep boosts blood pressure, induces stress, increases your appetite, slows your metabolism, dampens your mood and decreases cognition.

More information

The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute outlines how to prevent and control heart disease risk factors.

Source: New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center
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<http://consumer.healthday.com/Article.asp?AID=648855>

Want to know more about heart attack warning signs and risk factors?

On the site found below visitors can access various videos on questions and answers on heart health and heart attacks. The Heart Truth Videos are short films that spotlight Heart Attack Warning Symptoms, Heart Attack Risk Factors, and NHLBI's The Heart Truth campaign.

- Heart Attack Warning Symptoms
- Heart Attack Warning Symptoms (Spanish)
- Heart Disease Risk Factors
- Heart Disease Risk Factors (Spanish)
- The Heart Truth Campaign

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/educational/hearttruth/>

Healthy Recipe: Chicken Broccoli Stir Fry

Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 1 Tbsp low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp Schezuan sauce
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 lb boneless chicken breast, cut into 1 inch cubes
- 2 cups of frozen broccoli florets
- 1 6-oz package of frozen snow peas
- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 2 cups of cooked brown rice
- 1 Tbsp sesame seeds (optional)

Instructions:

Mix orange juice, soy sauce, Schezuan sauce, and cornstarch in a small bowl. Set aside. Heat oil in wok and add chicken. Stir fry for about 5-7 minutes. Add cabbage, broccoli, snow peas, and sauce mixture. Cook for about 5 minutes until vegetables are heated through. Serve over brown rice. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Yield: 4 servings

Preparation Time: 25 mins

Each serving provides:

Calories: 340

Fat: 8 g

Protein: 28 g

Sodium: 240 mg,

Carbohydrate: 35 g

Fiber: 5 g

Sugars 5 g

Source:

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/dnparecipe/RecipeDetails.aspx?RecipeId=736&Search=&PageNumber=1&SortBy=TA&PerformOrSearch=1&Fruits=&Vegetables=&MealTypes=23>