



# LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK



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Kick off your program with a warm welcome and your opening remarks. This could include an inspiring quote or reading or share with the group why this topic is important to you and your reason for offering to host this lesson.

# LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

## | Lesson Overview

### Welcome

- Program Topic

### Health Lesson

- Learn the Warning Signs of a Heart Attack and how it differs from Cardiac Arrest
- Don't Wait to Call 9-1-1
- Embrace Life's Essential 8® to Reduce Risk

### Call to Action



Review the information on the slide.

# LEARN ALL YOU CAN ABOUT HEART ATTACK

about every  
**40 seconds**  
an American has  
a heart attack



Ask the group for a moment of silence. When it is over, note that during that time someone died from a heart attack

- Review the information on the slide.
- Explain that heart and blood vessel diseases are also called heart disease

## THE GOOD NEWS



**Every year, thousands of Americans survive a heart attack and go back to work and enjoy a normal life.**



Ask the group:

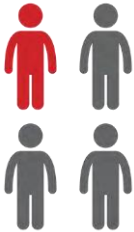
- Do you know anyone who has had a heart attack?

Review the information on the slide.

- Give hope by noting that tens of thousands of Americans survive heart attack, go back to work and enjoy a normal life. You have every reason to be confident of a full recovery. Hearts can heal and with each passing day get stronger.
- That's why it is so important to know the warning signs of heart attack and call 9-1-1 for help right away. This is today's call to action and you will hear it repeated multiple times.

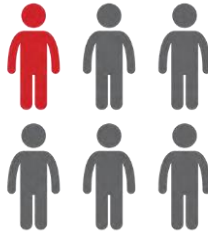
## HEART DISEASE IS...

### The #1 Killer for All Americans



**1 in 4**

**Black Americans**  
die from  
heart disease.



**1 in 6**

**American Indians and  
Alaska Natives** die  
from heart disease.



**1 in 5**

**Hispanic  
Americans** die  
from heart  
disease.



Review the information on the slide.

- Emphasize the importance of members of multicultural communities to develop an awareness about heart disease and the signs of a potential heart attack.

## POINT 1: LEARN THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

- Discomfort in the center of the chest that:
  - Feels like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain
  - Lasts more than a few minutes
  - Goes away and comes back
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach
- Shortness of breath, with or without chest discomfort
- Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, and feeling light-headed



- Ask for volunteers to take turns reading a symptom aloud.
- Summarize the signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:
  - Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of your chest. It lasts more than a few minutes, or goes away and comes back.
  - Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, your back, neck, jaw or stomach.
  - Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
  - Other signs such as breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.
- The most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort.

## WARNING SIGNS MAY DIFFER IN WOMEN

**Women can experience a heart attack without chest pressure.**

**The more common symptoms in women may be:**

- Shortness of breath
- Nausea/vomiting
- Pressure in lower chest/upper abdomen
- Jaw, neck or upper back pain
- Dizziness
- Light-headedness
- Extreme fatigue



Review the information on the slide.

- Women are more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea or vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

## VIDEO: SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK

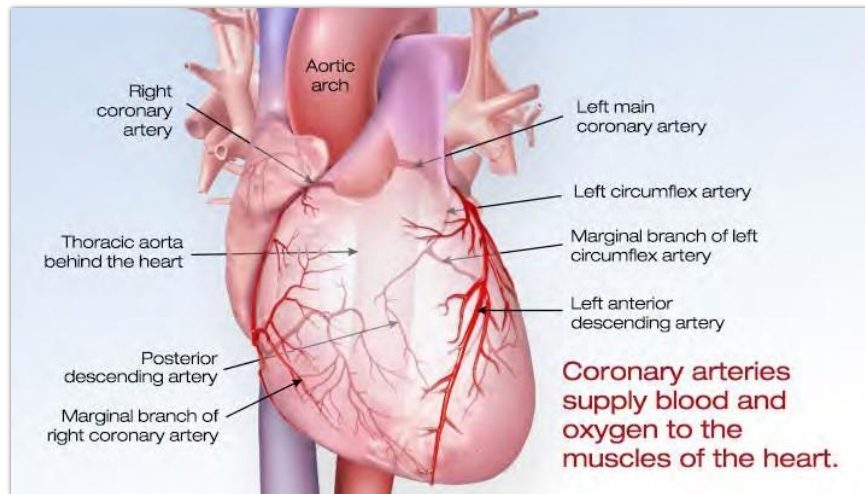


PREP NOTE: Before the program, review the resource list for this lesson. Check the URL for the "Elizabeth Banks in "Just a Little Heart Attack" video. If you are not going to have a live Internet connection, download the YouTube video ahead of time to your computer. Or, skip this slide.

- Play the video.
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_JI487DlqTA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_JI487DlqTA)



# WHAT CAUSES A HEART ATTACK?



PREP NOTE: If you are going to have an Internet connection, consider playing the Heart Attack animation. Click on this image to activate the embedded link. Or look up the URL on the resources list for this lesson and navigate to it to at this point in the lesson.

Explain to the group:

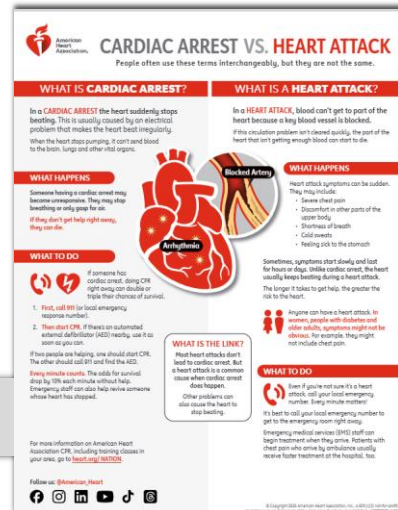
- A heart attack occurs when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart muscle is severely reduced or stopped.
- This happens because coronary arteries that supply the heart with blood can slowly become thicker and harder from a buildup of fat, cholesterol and other substances, called plaque.
- This slow process is known as atherosclerosis.
- If the plaque breaks open and a blood clot forms that blocks the blood flow, a heart attack occurs.

# IS IT A HEART ATTACK OR CARDIAC ARREST?

**Heart attack is a circulation problem.**  
Blood flow to the heart is blocked.

**Cardiac arrest is an electrical problem.**  
The heart malfunctions and suddenly stops beating unexpectedly.

A heart attack may **CAUSE** cardiac arrest.



Review the information on the slide.

## POINT 2: DON'T WAIT TO CALL 9-1-1

### Minutes matter.

#### Fast action can save lives.

- **Call 911** – This is the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment
- Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment as soon as they arrive



### Minutes matter.

#### Fast action can save lives.

- **Call 911** – This is the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment
  - Call 9-1-1 (or send someone to do that)
  - Give **Hands-Only CPR**:
    - Push hard and fast in the center of the chest
  - Whoever calls 911 should stay on the phone until the 911 dispatcher says that it's OK to hang up
- Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment as soon as they arrive

## MANY PUT OFF GETTING HELP

### Some people having a heart attack wait before getting help.

- Some people may feel it would be embarrassing to have a “false alarm.”
- Others may be so afraid of having a heart attack that they tell themselves they aren’t having one.



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Ask the group:

- Do you have a tendency to brush off health problems?
- Review the information on the slide.
- Emphasize the importance of getting help right away.

## WORRY ABOUT CALLING 9-1-1?

### Many people wonder:

- Do I need to **pay up front** for the ambulance?
- Will I get in **trouble**?
- Do I need an **ID card** for emergency medical services to help me?



**No. Don't wait to call 911.**



- Ask for volunteers to read a question, and then for another to answer “No. Don’t wait to call 9-1-1.”
- Emphasize that if someone is in need of emergency services, not to wait to call for emergency help.

## TAKE THESE STEPS TODAY

### Before there is an emergency...

- Learn the symptoms of a heart attack.
- Find out what hospitals in your area have 24-hour emergency cardiac care.
- Remember you should always call 911 in an emergency.



- Review the information on the slide.
- Emphasize the importance of making time to really do these things. It can save a life.







## POINT 3: EMBRACE LIFE'S ESSENTIAL 8™ TO REDUCE RISK

1. **Eat Better:** Choose foods that are low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and salt.
2. **Be More Active**
3. **Quit Tobacco:** And avoid other people's tobacco smoke.
4. **Get Healthier Sleep:** Most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep each night. Children require more and varies depending on their age.
5. **Manage Weight:** And keep your weight under control.
6. **Control Cholesterol**
7. **Reduce Blood Sugar:** And control your blood sugar if you have diabetes.
8. **Control Blood Pressure:** And treat high blood pressure if you have it.



- Ask the group:
  - Have you heard of Life's Essential 8?
  - Do you try to live by Life's Essential 8?
- Explain that by embracing Life's Essential 8, you are also helping to avoid heart attack.
- Review the first bullet with the list of Life's Essential 8 principles.
- Note that in addition to these things, it's important to get regular check-ups and take any medicine as prescribed.

## CALL TO ACTION

- Learn the warning signs of a heart attack
- If you see someone with the warning signs of a heart attack, call 911 immediately
- Embrace Life's Essential 8® to reduce risk
- Keep us informed -        
Follow us **@AmericanHeart** on social media and DM us to let us know how you're doing!



- Review the call to action on the slide.
- Ask the group:
  - What are the warning signs of heart attack?
  - How long should you wait before calling 9-1-1?