



Know the warning signs of a heart attack

What it feels like — and exactly what to do

Draft — under clinical review. General information only; not a substitute for advice from your doctor. To be finalised by ACF clinical advisers before publication.

Call 000 immediately if warning signs are severe, get worse, or last more than 10 minutes. Better to call an ambulance than to wait or drive yourself.

What a heart attack can feel like

- **Chest discomfort** — pain, pressure, heaviness or tightness in the centre of the chest.
- **Pain spreading** to the arms, shoulders, neck, jaw or back.
- **Shortness of breath**, with or without chest discomfort.
- **Cold sweat, nausea, light-headedness** or a sense that something is very wrong.

Symptoms can differ in women, older people and people with diabetes — sometimes with less obvious chest pain and more breathlessness, fatigue or nausea.

What to do

- **Stop and rest.** Sit or lie down.
- **Call 000** if symptoms are severe, worsening, or last 10 minutes.
- Chew a dose of aspirin if advised by the operator and you are not allergic.
- Stay on the line and follow instructions.

If someone collapses (cardiac arrest)

- **Call 000** and start **CPR** immediately.
- Push hard and fast in the centre of the chest, about **100-120 a minute**.
- Send someone for an **AED (defibrillator)** and follow its prompts.
- Keep going until the ambulance arrives.