

# Toolbox Talks

## Healthy Heart Awareness Month Part 1

February 4, 2013



### February is Healthy Heart Awareness Month.

#### Heart Attack, Stroke, & Cardiac Arrest Warning Signs

**Every 39 seconds, an adult dies from a cardiovascular disease such as a heart attack or stroke. Cardiovascular disease claims the lives of more than 800,000 adults each year, 150,000 of whom are under the age of 65. Learn what you can do to reduce your risk.**

#### ♥ Act in Time

As February begins, it also kicks off American Healthy Heart Month. The American Heart Association has launched a new "Act in Time" campaign to increase people's awareness of heart attack & the importance of calling 9-1-1 immediately at the onset of heart attack symptoms.

#### ♥ Dial 9-1-1 Fast

Heart attack & stroke are life-or-death emergencies; every second counts. If you see or have any of the listed symptoms, immediately call 9-1-1. Not all these signs occur in every heart attack or stroke. Sometimes they go away & return. If some occur, get help fast! Today, heart attack & stroke victims can benefit from new medications & treatments unavailable to patients in years past. For example, clot-busting drugs can stop some heart attacks & strokes in progress, reducing disability & saving lives. But to be effective, these drugs must be given relatively quickly after heart attack or stroke symptoms first appear. So again, don't delay, get help right away!

#### ♥ Statistics

Coronary heart disease is America's No. 1 killer. Stroke is No. 3 as well as a leading cause of serious disability. That's why it's so important to reduce your risk factors, know the warning signs, & know how to respond quickly & properly if warning signs occur.

#### ♥ Heart Attack (damage is occurring to the heart muscle) Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden & intense like the "movie heart attack," where no one doubts what's happening. But in reality, most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong & wait too long before getting help. Here are some signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- ♥ Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes (3-5 min), or that goes away & comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, indigestion, or pain.
- ♥ Discomfort in other areas of the upper body. Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach. The sharp pain shooting down your left arm or in your neck.
- ♥ Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort.
- ♥ Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.
- ♥ No symptoms: some people will never experience any of the above symptoms while having a heart attack; the best prevention of a heart attack is maintaining a healthy diet & lifestyle.



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, & back or jaw pain. Learn the warning signs, but remember this: Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, have it checked out. Minutes matter! Fast action can save lives, maybe your own. Don't wait more than five minutes to call 9-1-1.

Calling 9-1-1 is almost always the fastest way to get life-saving treatment. Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment when they arrive up to an hour sooner than if someone gets to the hospital by car. The staff are also trained to revive someone whose heart has stopped. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital, too.

If you can't access the emergency medical services (EMS), have someone drive you to the hospital right away. If you're the one having symptoms, don't drive yourself, unless you have absolutely no other option. Lastly, if you do not have stomach problems take an ASPIRIN (Not Tylenol or Ibuprofen), two 81 mg baby aspirin or one 325 adult aspirin. This can also help thin your blood & possibly save your life.

♥ **Stroke Warning Signs:** The American Red Cross says these are some of the warning signs of a stroke

- ♥ Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body
- ♥ Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- ♥ Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- ♥ Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- ♥ Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

♥ **Remember FAST (Face. Arms. Speech. Time.):** these simple steps can help determine if the person is experiencing a stroke

- Face:** Have the person smile & check for signs of weakness on one side of the face
- Arms:** Have the person raise both arms at the same time & check for weakness or numbness in one or both the limbs
- Speech:** Ask the person to say a simple sentence (i.e. Lunch is ready), check for any slurred speech or trouble speaking
- Time:** Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately & note the time the stroke signals started.

If you or someone with you has one or more of these signs, don't delay! If given within three hours of the start of symptoms, a clot-busting drug can reduce long-term disability for the most common types of stroke.

Stay with the person, they may feel fearful or anxious. Most often, they do not understand what has happened to them. Offer comfort & reassurance, but never give them food or water, & wait until Emergency Medical Services arrive.

♥ **Cardiac Arrest (heart has stopped beating):** strikes immediately & without warning. Here are the signs:

- ♥ Sudden loss of responsiveness (no response to tapping on shoulders).
- ♥ No normal breathing (the victim does not take a normal breath when you tilt the head up & check for at least five seconds).
- ♥ No pulse when checked at your pulse points (Wrist, Neck, & Upper Arm)

If these signs of cardiac arrest are present, tell someone to call 9-1-1 & get an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) (if one is available) & begin CPR immediately. Remember, it only takes 6 minutes of blood loss to the human brain for brain damage to occur. After 10 minutes, it begins irreparable damage. If you are alone with an adult who has these signs of cardiac arrest, call 9-1-1 & get an AED (if one is available) before you begin CPR.



# Toolbox Talks

## Healthy Heart Awareness Month Part 2

### ABCs of Preventing Heart Disease, Stroke, & Heart Attack



Sounds simple doesn't it? So why are coronary heart disease & stroke the No. 1 & No. 3 killers of Americans? One reason is undeniably a lack of commitment to a heart-healthy lifestyle. Your lifestyle is not only your best defense against heart disease & stroke, it's also your responsibility. By following these simple steps, you can reduce all of the modifiable risk factors for heart disease, heart attack, & stroke:

♥ **Stop smoking.** If you smoke, look to quit. If someone in your household smokes, encourage them to quit. We know it's tough. But it's tougher to recover from a heart attack or stroke or to live with chronic heart disease. Commit to quit, it will be better for your overall health.

♥ **Reduce blood cholesterol.** Fat lodged in your arteries is a disaster waiting to happen. Sooner or later it could trigger a heart attack or stroke. You have to reduce your intake of saturated & trans fat & get moving. If diet & exercise alone don't get those numbers down, then medication is the key. Take it just like the doctor orders. Here's the lowdown on where those numbers need to be:

♥ **Total Cholesterol:** Less than 200 mg/dL

♥ **LDL (bad) Cholesterol:** LDL cholesterol goals vary by person.

- ♥ Low risk for heart disease: Less than 160 mg/dL
- ♥ Intermediate risk for heart disease: Less than 130 mg/dL
- ♥ High risk for heart disease (including those with heart disease or diabetes): Less than 100mg/dL

♥ Information provided by American Heart Association, CDC, Medic First Aid, & American Red Cross as presented by [nationalsafety.wordpress.com](http://nationalsafety.wordpress.com)

♥ **LDL (bad) Cholesterol:** LDL cholesterol goals vary by person.

- ♥ Low risk for heart disease: Less than 160 mg/dL
- ♥ Intermediate risk for heart disease: Less than 130 mg/dL
- ♥ High risk for heart disease (including those with heart disease or diabetes): Less than 100mg/dL

♥ **HDL (good) Cholesterol:** 40 mg/dL or higher for men & 50 mg/dL or higher for women

♥ **Triglycerides:** Less than 150 mg/dL



♥ **Lower high blood pressure.** It's the single largest risk factor for stroke. Stroke is the No. 3 killer & one of the leading causes of disability in the United States. Stroke recovery is difficult at best & could leave you disabled for life. Shake that salt habit, take any medication the doctor recommends exactly as prescribed, & get moving. You need to get those numbers down & keep them down. The American Heart Association recommended less than 120/80 mmHg.

♥ **Be physically active every day.** Research has shown that getting 30-60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week can help lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol, & keep your weight at a healthy level. But something IS better than nothing. If you're doing nothing now, start out slow. Studies show that people who have achieved even a moderate level of fitness are much less likely to die early than those with a low fitness level.

♥ **Aim for a healthy weight.** Obesity is an epidemic in America, not only for adults, but also for children. Fad diets & supplements are not the answer. Good nutrition & physical activity are the only way to maintain a healthy weight. Obesity places you at risk for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, & insulin resistance (a precursor of type 2 diabetes) the very factors that heighten your risk of cardiovascular disease. The Body Mass Index (BMI) will tell you if your weight is within a healthy range.

♥ **Manage diabetes.** Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of diabetes-related death. People with diabetes are 2-4 times more likely to develop cardiovascular disease due to a variety of risk factors, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, obesity, & lack of physical activity.

♥ **Reduce stress.** Some scientists have noted a relationship between coronary heart disease risk & stress in a person's life that may affect the risk factors for heart disease & stroke. For example, people under stress may overeat, start smoking, or smoke more than they otherwise would. Research has even shown that stress reaction in young adults can help predict middle-age blood pressure risk.

♥ **Limit alcohol.** Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure, cause heart failure, & lead to stroke. It can contribute to high triglycerides, produce irregular heartbeats, & affect cancer & other diseases. It contributes to obesity, alcoholism, suicide, & accidents. The risk of heart disease in people who drink moderate amounts of alcohol (an average of one drink for women or two drinks for men per day) is lower than in non-drinkers. However, it is not recommended that non-drinkers start using alcohol or that drinkers increase the amount they drink.