

HOME INSTRUCTIONS **HEART ATTACK WARNING SIGNS**

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK?

The most common warning signals of a heart attack are:

- Uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest lasting more than a few minutes.
- Pain spreading to the shoulders, neck or arms.
- Chest discomfort with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath.

Less common warning signs of heart attack are:

- Atypical chest pain, stomach, or abdominal pain.
- Nausea or dizziness.
- Shortness of breath and difficulty breathing.
- Unexplained anxiety, weakness, or fatigue.
- Palpitations, cold sweat, or paleness.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE ONE OF THESE?

Having chest pain, unexplained shortness of breath, or one of the other warning signs listed above may indicate your heart is not getting enough blood flow. You could be having a heart attack or at risk of going on to have a heart attack. Planning in advance what you would do if you have chest pain or one of these other warning signs, can save your life. Discuss your plan with your doctor and family.

Take Action Immediately

If you are suffering a heart attack, every minute counts. Do not waste precious time.

◆ **If you have chest pain** similar in quality to the pain that brought you to the hospital, stop what you are doing and rest. If you have a different type of chest pain, have unexplained shortness of breath, or one of the other heart attack warning signs you should also follow these instructions.

◆ If you have been prescribed nitroglycerin by your doctor, take 1 tablet of and place under tongue. If you have been given nitroglycerin spray, use that. Wait 5 minutes and

if the pain is not relieved, take another tablet or spray. Again wait 5 minutes and if the pain is not relieved, take one more tablet or spray (maximum of 3 over 15 minutes).

◆ If pain is not relieved within 10 minutes of rest or with nitroglycerin, **call 911, the local emergency number, or an ambulance service.** Do not waste time trying to reach your doctor's office. If your symptoms are severe don't even wait the 10 minutes or for the nitroglycerin to work before calling.

◆ While you are waiting for the paramedics or ambulance, take one **aspirin** 325 mg tablet and chew it, unless you are allergic or been told by your doctor not to take aspirin.

◆ When you arrive at the hospital, **tell them, "I have chest pain," and "I think I am having a heart attack,"** so you will get immediate attention.

◆ **Do not worry about a "false alarm."** If it turns out it is not a heart attack, your family and health care team will be glad you played it safe and be just as relieved as you are.

◆ If it turns out you are having a heart attack, getting the hospital quickly will allow your doctors to limit the amount of heart damage and make it more likely that you will quickly recover. Doctors often say "time is muscle" because they know how critical getting to the hospital right away can be for their patients.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

Talk to your doctor, nurse, or health care professional. Or call your local American Heart Association at (800) 242-8721.

The American Heart Association also has a web site you can visit at www.americanheart.org with additional information on the warning signs of heart attack and stroke.