



Heart Attack

Every second counts!



What is a heart attack?

Heart attacks are due to a severe blockage of blood to the heart. There are two distinct types; one that causes changes in the electrical system of your heart which can be seen on a test called an ECG (electrocardiogram). The other type of heart attack does not have ECG changes and represents most heart attacks.

What causes a heart attack?

The heart works 24 hours a day, pumping oxygen and blood to all parts of the body. Blood is supplied to the heart through its coronary arteries (blood vessels). In heart disease, fatty (cholesterol) substances build up inside the walls of the arteries, making it more difficult for the blood to get through. This is called atherosclerosis. Blood clots can also occur in the arteries. If a blood clot suddenly cuts off the blood supply to the heart, a heart attack results.

What are the warning signs of a heart attack?

- ! Squeezing, pressure, a sharp or dull pain, or stabbing feeling in the chest area lasting more than 10-15 minutes
- ! Discomfort in neck, arms, shoulders, back, jaw or stomach
- ! Shortness of breath
- ! Feeling sick in the stomach
- ! Dizzy
- ! Sweaty and pale

It is important to quickly get the blood flowing back to the heart again.



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Reduce your risk of a heart attack

- ✓ If you smoke, try and quit
- ✓ Choose smaller portions and fewer kilojoules
- ✓ Eat more fruit and vegetables
- ✓ Make water your drink
- ✓ Be active every day
- ✓ Sit less and move more
- ✓ Get your doctor or health worker to check your blood pressure at each visit
- ✓ Get a yearly check on your cholesterol
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight range

Early treatment for a heart attack can prevent or limit damage to the heart muscle. Acting fast, by calling 000 at the first symptoms of a heart attack, can save your life. Ambulance staff can begin diagnosis and treatment even before you get to the hospital.

For more information

Contact your local Aboriginal Medical Service or Health worker. Aboriginal Chronic Care workers are located in NSW Health Services and some Aboriginal Medical Services.

PDFs can be downloaded and printed from Chronic Care for Aboriginal People Program: www.aci.health.nsw.gov.au/networks/ccap

Email: ACI-CCAP@health.nsw.gov.au

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What should I do if I think I am having a heart attack?

- > Dial 000 and stay on the phone
- > Ask for the ambulance service
- > Say you think you are having a heart attack
- > Do not drive yourself, tell or call a family member and wait for the ambulance to arrive

Recovery following a heart attack

Your doctor or health worker may recommend **Cardiac Rehabilitation** (cardiac rehab) to help you recover from a heart attack and to help prevent another heart attack. Cardiac rehab is a supervised program that helps you understand your heart condition and find ways to reduce your risk for future heart problems.

Free services

- > **Get Healthy Service**
Call the 'Get Healthy Service' for free personal telephone coaching to support you with your physical activity goals'. Your free NSW Health service provides the expertise and motivation you need to help reach your goals.
www.gethealthynsw.com.au
or call 1300 806 258
- > **NSW Health Make Healthy Normal**
www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au



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