

7 Signs Of A Heart Attack Women Need To Know

Dr. Terrence Baruch December 13, 2013 5:07 AM

When you see a male actor have a heart attack on TV, he has all the classic signs: He breaks out into a sweat, clutches his left arm, says he feels like an elephant is sitting on his chest, and then gracefully collapses.

As a heart specialist at a big hospital, I treat people with heart attacks every day. More than half of my patients are women—and women don't usually have those dramatic heart attack signs. In fact, most women (and even some men) having a heart attack don't realize what's happening to them and how serious it is. They don't call 911 for help until it's too late.

Heart attacks don't happen just to men. Some **435,000 women have heart attacks** each year, and about **267,000 of them die**—six times as many as die from breast cancer. If you're a woman, recognizing these seven common signs of a heart attack could save your life:

- 1. Chest pain.** It's often a feeling of pressure or mild discomfort anywhere in the chest—not just on the left side where your heart is.
- 2. Mild to severe pain or a sense of pressure in other parts of your body.** You might feel pain in places such as your stomach, shoulder, arm, throat, or even jaw. Women often ignore this, thinking it will just go away.
- 3. Stomach pain or nausea and vomiting.** Many women mistake this sign for indigestion or a stomach flu.
- 4. Sudden fatigue or weakness.** If you suddenly feel as if getting up from your chair to go into the kitchen would be as difficult as running a marathon, you may be having a heart attack.
- 5. Dizziness or lightheadedness.** This could be mistaken for lots of things, but it's a common sign of a heart attack in women.

6. Shortness of breath. If you can't get your breath even when sitting still, a heart attack could be the cause.

7. Suddenly breaking out into a cold sweat. This isn't anxiety or hot flashes—it's often a sign of a heart attack.

Know the signs—a heart attack is a medical emergency. If you want to live, call 911!

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