How to survive a Heart Attack when alone



If a heart attack happens and you're alone, what should you do?

Very few things are scarier than the thought of having a heart attack, let alone having a heart attack while all alone. Once heart attack symptoms start, problems can progress rapidly and you need to react quickly, and being prepared can be the difference between life and death. Read this article to learn you to survive a Heart Attack when alone.

Approximately 10,000 people die each year from cardiovascular disease (CVD) – including coronary heart disease (CHD), stroke and other circulatory diseases. The largest number of these deaths relate to CHD, mainly heart attack, at 5,000 ***(www.hse.ie).***

Coronary heart disease is the term that describes what happens when your heart's blood supply is blocked or interrupted by a build-up of fatty substances in the coronary arteries. If a coronary artery becomes completely blocked it can cause a heart attack. During a heart attack the heart muscle begins to die because of the lack of blood supply, this can cause permanent damage to the heart muscle and, it not treated straight away, can be fatal.

Many people will be on their own when they have a heart attack. It is vital to know how to help yourself if you are alone and think you're having a heart attack.

If you were to suffer a heart attack while in the company of people, calling out for help is probably the first instinctive thing you'd do. But what if a heart attack happens when you're alone, how do you survive?

Actions you can take during a heart attack

- Firstly, do not try and drive yourself to the hospital.
- If you think you are having a heart attack, stop whatever you are doing,

get to a safe place to rest and **dial 999/112 for immediate medical assistance.**

- If you are driving, pull over to the side of the road and then call for help. You can lose consciousness very quickly.

You need specialised treatment to be delivered to you as quickly as possible in order to save your heart muscle.

What can you do while you wait for medical help to arrive?

- Take 300mg of aspirin. Aspirin is a blood thinning medication which will improve your chances of survival when taken during a heart attack. It works by slowing the blood's ability to clot, so during a heart attack, it stabilizes any blood clots that might have formed and reduces the likelihood of further ones forming. Chew the aspirin to get it into your blood stream faster. You should not take an aspirin if you are allergic to it, have a history of bleeding ulcers, gave any bleeding problems such as Haemophilia or are under the age of 16.
- Unlock your front door and sit yourself down in the lazy W position, ideally propped comfortably against a wall or stable furniture.



- Aim and stay warm.
- Avoid exerting yourself and try to relax and stay as calm as you can.

When the paramedics get to you, they will start treatment immediately, this is what they are trained to you. They will get you to hospital quickly where you will get the best possible care.

Symptoms of a heart attack

The symptoms of heart attacks can vary widely and knowing the warning signs of a

heart attack is crucial. They differ between individuals, but also between men and women. A heart attack can come on suddenly and be intense. Or it can start slowly and be mild. Some patients don't experience any main and can mistake a heart attack for indigestion or angina. However, responding rapidly when you suspect a heart attack can greatly improve your chances for survival and avoiding serious heart damage.

The symptoms or pain of a heart attack is similar to that of angina but it is often more severe and unlike angina will not be relieved using a nitrate tablet or GTN spray. To know for sure if you're suffering from a heart attack, you first need to be able to identify its symptoms. **Classical symptoms of a heart attack** include:

- pain in the chest, especially in the centre, that lasts for a few minutes and comes and goes. This discomfort may feel like pressure, tightness, squeezing, or an aching sensation. It can manifest as pain or a general discomfort. If the pain lasts longer that 15 minutes, it may be the start of a heart attack.
- pain may radiate into the neck, arms, back, jaw, or stomach.
- Men often experience a heart attack as chest pain. However, post-menopausal women and anyone who is diabetic are far less likely to experience chest pain.
- Profuse sweating and a feeling of impending doom

However, post-menopausal women, the elderly, and those suffering from diabetes may develop **non-classical heart attack symptoms**. These include:

- Shortness of breath
- Mild chest pain
- Nausea, indigestion or heartburn
- Pain in the epigastric region (upper central portion of the abdomen)
- Feeling lightheaded or dizzy

Whatever your symptoms, you will probably feel extremely unwell and are likely to be pale, clammy and light headed. Listen to those symptoms and phone for help quickly.

Speed is of the essence in stopping heart attacks. Lifesaving measures are only effective for a brief period of time after symptoms begin, before heart muscle begins to die and your heart ceases to function. Don’t allow anyone (including medical personnel) to brush off your symptoms or talk you out of seeking help. Do not just wait, act immediately and be prepared to trust your instincts.

About us

Donegal Safety Services provide ***a number of First Aid Training Courses.***

If you have any questions at all regarding any of our courses we would be delighted to hear from you. You can contact us by visiting our contact us page or by emailing us directly on info@donegalsafetyservices.ie

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Hope you enjoyed this article on how to survive a Heart Attack when alone.