

CARDIAC ARREST VS. HEART ATTACK

People often use these terms interchangeably, but they are not the same.

WHAT IS CARDIAC ARREST?

In a **CARDIAC ARREST** the heart suddenly stops beating. This is usually caused by an electrical problem that makes the heart beat irregularly.

When the heart stops pumping, it can't send blood to the brain, lungs and other vital organs.

WHAT HAPPENS

Someone having a cardiac arrest may become unresponsive. They may stop breathing or only gasp for air.

If they don't get help right away, they can die.

WHAT TO DO



If someone has cardiac arrest, doing CPR right away can double or triple their chances of survival.

1. **First, call 911** (or local emergency response number).
2. **Then start CPR.** If there's an automated external defibrillator (AED) nearby, use it as soon as you can.

If two people are helping, one should start CPR. The other should call 911 and find the AED.

Every minute counts. The odds for survival drop by 10% each minute without help. Emergency staff can also help revive someone whose heart has stopped.

For more information on American Heart Association CPR, including training classes in your area, go to [heart.org/NATION](https://www.heart.org/NATION).

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WHAT IS A HEART ATTACK?

In a **HEART ATTACK**, blood can't get to part of the heart because a key blood vessel is blocked.

If this circulation problem isn't cleared quickly, the part of the heart that isn't getting enough blood can start to die.

WHAT HAPPENS

Heart attack symptoms can be sudden. They may include:

- Severe chest pain
- Discomfort in other parts of the upper body
- Shortness of breath
- Cold sweats
- Feeling sick to the stomach

Sometimes, symptoms start slowly and last for hours or days. Unlike cardiac arrest, the heart usually keeps beating during a heart attack.

The longer it takes to get help, the greater the risk to the heart.



Anyone can have a heart attack. In women, people with diabetes and older adults, symptoms might not be obvious. For example, they might not include chest pain.

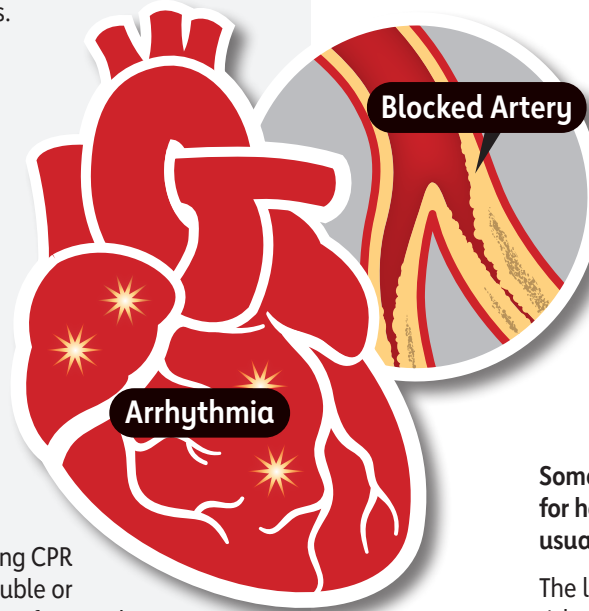
WHAT TO DO



Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, call your local emergency number. Every minute matters!

It's best to call your local emergency number to get to the emergency room right away.

Emergency medical services (EMS) staff can begin treatment when they arrive. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital, too.



WHAT IS THE LINK?

Most heart attacks don't lead to cardiac arrest. But a heart attack is a common cause when cardiac arrest does happen.

Other problems can also cause the heart to stop beating.