

Your Health Matters! By Angela Kwok (pharmacist) Cunderdin Pharmacy

Heart Attack: What is It and What to do?

- Our heart is a muscular pump that needs a continual supply of oxygen
- It gets oxygen from the blood which flow through the coronary artery on the heart's surface
- A heart attack occurs when the blood supply to the heart is suddenly blocked, usually due to a blood clot or plaque

Risks for Heart Attack Include:

- Family history of heart attack or heart disease
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Overweight, poor diet and physical inactivity



Common Heart Attack Symptoms may include:

- Discomfort or pain in the centre of your chest
- It may feel like a heaviness, tightness or pressure
- It may also feel like bad indigestion or a choking feeling
- Discomfort may radiate to one or both arms, shoulders, neck, jaw or back
- You may feel shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness or cold, clammy skin
- Symptoms may come on suddenly or slowly, and get progressively worse

What to Do During a Heart Attack:

- **CALL 000** (or 112 if '000' does not work on your mobile phone)
- **SEND FOR A DEFIBRILLATOR** (IGA, museum, 'New' Sporting Club, Men's Shed, Footy Club)
Note: If a defibrillator is available, attach the pads as early as possible & follow instructions

If person has Nitrolingual Spray or Anginine tablets:

- Sit person down. Rest and reassure them. Loosen tight clothing
- Get Nitrolingual Spray or anginine tablets for them, put spray or tablet under the tongue
- If symptoms do not go away in 5 minutes, use the spray or tablet again
- If after 2 sprays or 2 tablets (total of 10 mins), symptoms don't resolve, call 000
- Dissolve One 300mg aspirin (e.g. Solprin/Aspro Clear) in water if conscious (unless allergic)
- Stay with them & monitor them
- Be prepared to do CPR or defibrillate if the heart stops beating

If they don't have GTN spray or Anginine tablet:

- Call 000, do not hang up
- Sit them down, rest and reassure them
- Send someone for a defibrillator and attach pads ASAP
- Dissolve One 300mg aspirin (e.g. Solprin/Aspro Clear) in water, if conscious (unless allergic)
- Stay with them (watch their conscious state and breathing)
- Be prepared to do CPR
- Be ready to defibrillate if the heart stops beating

Medical Treatment of Heart Attack May Include: Medicines to dissolve a blood clot (thrombolytics), Long term use of medicines to lower the risk of further heart problems, Angioplasty, stent implantation, Coronary Bypass Graft Surgery (CABG), Defibrillator or Implantable Cardiac Defibrillator (ICD)

For more information about medicines for heart disease, talk to your doctor or pharmacist

Useful Websites: NPS Medicine <http://www.nps.org.au/medicines>

Heart Foundation <http://www.heartfoundation.org.au>

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