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## HEART ATTACK

# Diagnosis

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**Calling 9-1-1** for an ambulance and getting to the emergency room quickly if you suspect a heart attack is critical. Once at the hospital, you will likely get tests to see whether you are having a heart attack or whether you have already had one.

An electrocardiogram (EKG) is the most common initial test and may be given within minutes of your arrival at the hospital. An EKG will check whether you may be having a heart attack.

Based on the results of the EKG, your doctor may then order more tests, ask you about your medical history, and do a physical exam.

## Blood tests

During a heart attack, heart muscle cells die and release proteins into your bloodstream. [Blood tests](#) can measure the amount of these proteins in your blood. For example, you may get a troponin test to measure the amount of a protein called troponin in your blood. Troponin leaks when heart muscle cells die during a heart attack.

Blood tests often are repeated to check for changes over time.

## Heart imaging tests

Imaging tests, such as a chest X-ray or computed tomography (CT) help your doctor check whether your heart is working properly. You may also need a stress test, which can help your doctor determine the amount of damage to your heart or if the cause of the heart attack is coronary artery disease.

Learn more about heart imaging tests on our [Heart Tests](#) page.

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