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# Heart Attack First Aid Steps Everyone Must Know

Between 1990 and 2016, the death rate due to cardiovascular diseases rose by 34% in India. While a heart attack is a serious, life-threatening occurrence that is increasingly

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## *An unconscious patient needs to be given immediate CPR*

Between 1990 and 2016, the death rate due to cardiovascular diseases rose by 34% in India. While a heart attack is a serious, life-threatening occurrence that is increasingly spreading across our country, it is possible to save someone's life if only one knows how to provide basic heart attack first aid.

Witnessing a loved one or even a stranger in the deathly embrace of a heart attack is overwhelming and scary. But what's worse is to be helpless and to not know what to do. After reading this quick guide on heart attack first aid, you will feel more empowered and aware to help save a life.

## Spotting a Heart Attack

The symptoms of a heart attack differ for men and women, but the need for quick action remains as crucial. Spotting a heart attack by quickly realizing the symptoms is critical in order to provide heart attack first aid. >

## Men

- Crushing/ burning chest pain
- Sensation of squeezing, pressure or discomfort in the chest
- Discomfort or tightness in the neck and/or jaw
- Shortness of breath and palpitations
- Pain in the arms, often left arm, shoulder blades and back

Often, men suffering a heart attack will break out in a sweat and can lose consciousness. The pain is usually gradual and can last for several minutes. It's not uncommon for the pain to fade and come back again, in which case heart attack first aid becomes essential.

## **Women**

- Pressure or pain in the lower chest
- Pressure or pain the upper abdomen
- Pressure in the upper back
- Nausea and lightheaded
- Shortness of breath
- Extreme fatigue

Women suffering a heart attack usually believe it to be indigestion, a heart burn or extreme tiredness. Being aware and providing heart attack first aid will do no harm even if it turns out to only be indigestion.

## **Providing Immediate Heart Attack First Aid**

### **For a Conscious Patient**

- Ease strain on the patient's heart by helping them in a comfortable position. An ideal position is on the floor, leaning against a wall with head and shoulders supported and knees bent.
- Loosen the clothing around their neck, chest and waist. For instance, if they are wearing a tie, remove it and unbutton the top button.
- Call for help but don't let bystanders crowd the patient. Avoid leaving the patient unattended.
- Call an emergency helpline number 112 or 102 for an ambulance. You can call the local, neighbourhood hospital if you believe that's going to be quicker.
- If the patient has prescribed medicine for a cardiovascular diseases, help them take it.
- Continuously monitor the patient — check their breathing, pulse and keep an eye on their consciousness.

### **For an Unconscious Patient**

Heart attack first aid for a patient who loses consciousness goes a little beyond the above steps.

- Make sure to inform the ambulance/emergency number operator that the patient is unconscious. This is essential because they will despatch the ambulance with needed equipment like a defibrillator, which is used to restart the heart, ECG machine, ventilator, oxygen cylinder, etc.
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is advised when the patient is unconscious.
- If you aren't trained in CPR, provide hands-only chest compressions. You can be guided by the emergency number operator/medical assist on call to perform them.

## **How to Give Chest Compressions (for adults)**

- On the centre of the patient's chest, place the heel of your hand, one on top of the other and lace your fingers together.
- Keep your shoulders directly above your hands and straighten out your arms.
- Compress chest at least by 2 inches by pushing hard and fast.
- Compress at least 100 times per minute with minimal interruptions.
- Let the patient's chest rise completely before you push down again.
- Stop only if the patient starts breathing normally again, a trained person or medical assistant takes over, you're too exhausted to continue properly or an automated external defibrillator (AED) is available.

Staying calm and following the above listed heart attack first aid steps could help double or triple the chance of someone's survival according to studies. Basic first aid awareness and training is essential for everyone to save someone's life – loved one or otherwise.

Medical care and treatment, especially in case of cardiovascular diseases is expensive. To ensure that only the best treatment is provided to you and your loved ones, getting [health insurance](#) is crucial, as it covers all the expenses pertaining to medical treatment and hospitalisation.

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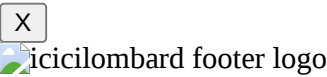
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