

Title: My Chest Hurts, Am I Having a Heart Attack?

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Abstract: The only symptom ruling out an immediate heart attack in a non-urgent setting is the presence of chest-wall tenderness. No signs or symptoms of a patient's chest pain history can definitively identify a diagnosis of an immediate heart attack in the non-urgent care setting, but they should be evaluated carefully.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

What is a heart attack?

A heart attack occurs when your heart does not get enough oxygen, most often happens because of a blocked blood vessel. The part of your heart that does not get enough air then will become damaged or will die. This is why some people experience medical problems after being treated for a heart attack.

To minimize and prevent damage to someone's heart after a heart attack, it is important to quickly diagnose and treat people when they are having heart attack symptoms. Many people feel the symptoms of a heart attack when doing a physical activity.

For more information about heart disease and how you can keep up good heart health:

American Heart Association
<http://www.americanheart.org/>

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University of Minnesota
Primary Care Clerkship
Patient Education Tool

Chest Pain Signs to Watch Out For

- Chest pain also felt in the left arm and/or shoulder
- Chest pain also felt in the right arm and/or shoulder
- Chest pain also felt in the both arms and/or shoulders
- Chest pain also felt in the neck
- Chest pain also felt in the back

Be honest! This will help your doctor know if you are having a heart attack!

- Chest pain felt above your stomach but below your throat, similar to heartburn
- Feeling like there is a weight on your chest
- Feeling like you need to throw up and/or throwing up
- Sweating
- Can't cause the pain by pressing on your body where you feel it

Should I call my doctor?

If you are feeling one or more of the **Chest Pain Signs to Watch Out For** along with your chest pain, you should contact your doctor right away. Having these symptoms does not mean you are having a heart attack.

Other symptoms to watch for:

- shortness of breath
- dizziness
- fainting
- cough
- feeling like your heart is beating too fast

If you believe that you are
having a heart attack, you
should call 911!