



# WELLNESS

PHYSICAL · MENTAL · SOCIAL

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## MEN AND HEART DISEASE – KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men in the United States, killing 357,761 men in 2019 –that’s about 1 in every 4 male deaths. This includes men of most racial and ethnic groups, including African Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Hispanics, and whites. For Asian American or Pacific Islander men, heart disease is second only to cancer.



**Half of the men who die suddenly of coronary heart disease had no previous symptoms. Even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk for heart disease.**

### HEART DISEASE

When plaque builds up in the coronary arteries, it is called heart disease or coronary artery disease. The heart doesn't get the blood that it needs to work well. Over time, this can weaken or damage the heart. If the blood flow is blocked, it can cause a heart attack.

Remember, even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk for heart disease.

Your heart muscle needs oxygen to survive. A heart attack occurs when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart muscle is severely reduced or cut off completely.

**Don't wait to get help if you experience any of these heart attack warning signs. Some heart attacks are sudden and intense. But most start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Pay attention to your body and call 911 if you experience:**

- **Chest discomfort:** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes – or it may go away and then return. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body:** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath:** This can occur with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs:** Other possible signs include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

### STROKE

Plaque can also build up in the neck arteries that go to the brain. Plaque in these arteries, called carotid arteries, can limit blood flow to the brain. If the blood flow is blocked, it can cause an ischemic stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA). Another type of stroke is called a hemorrhagic stroke. This type of stroke happens when an artery in the brain leaks or bursts. This causes bleeding inside the brain or near the surface of the brain.

During a stroke, every minute counts! Fast treatment can lessen the brain damage that stroke can cause. By knowing the signs and symptoms of stroke, you can take quick action and perhaps save a life – maybe even your own.

Acting F.A.S.T. can help stroke patients get the treatments they desperately need. The stroke treatments that work best are available only if the stroke is recognized and diagnosed within 3 hours of the first symptoms. Stroke patients may not be eligible for these if they don't arrive at the hospital in time.

**If you think someone may be having a stroke, act F.A.S.T. and do the following simple test:**

- F – Face:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?
- A – Arms:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?
- S – Speech:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is the speech slurred or strange?
- T – Time:** If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 right away.

**Do not wait if you think you are having a heart attack or stroke. Getting help fast can save your life.**

**Source:** [cdc.gov/heartdisease/men.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/men.htm)

Explore more at the [Chiefs Wellness Program homepage](#) »