

# Care After a Heart Attack — At a Glance

For an Emergency, Call 911

## Manage Your Risks



You can slow down your coronary artery disease if you manage these risks:

- Control your blood pressure.
- Get regular exercise.
- Eat a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol.
- Watch your weight.
- Control your blood glucose (if you have diabetes).

### ■ Do not use tobacco.

If you need help quitting, ask your doctor for resources.



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## Activity



Exercise should not be stressful to be helpful.

- Getting aerobic exercises (that raise your heart rate) every day will help reduce your cholesterol, weight and stress.
- Follow your walking schedule from Cardiac Rehab.
- Take rest periods. Don't get too tired.
- Sexual activity puts about the same demand on your heart as walking up two flights of stairs. Talk with your doctor about your concerns or questions.
- Stop what you are doing if you are short of breath or if you have chest discomfort. Rest until you feel better.

## Medicines



Fill your prescriptions right away. Take your medicines as prescribed. Call your pharmacy one week before you need a refill.

- **aspirin:** reduces the chance of blood clots
- **beta-blocker:** reduces how hard your heart works
- **anti-platelet:** reduces risk of stroke, heart attack and other conditions caused by blocked arteries
- **ACE/ARB:** makes it easier for your heart to pump blood
- **statin:** lowers LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels
- **nitroglycerin:** relieves chest pain (angina):
  - Sit down. Place one tablet under your tongue.
  - If your chest pain does not go away in 5 minutes, **call 911** or follow your doctor's directions.

## Self-care



- Avoid being outside in very hot and cold weather.
- Read all food labels for cholesterol, sodium (salt) and fat levels.
- Eat a diet low in sodium (salt), fat and cholesterol.
- Talk with your doctor about when you can drive and return to work.
- Relax and manage your stress. Severe or unneeded stress can cause your heart to pump harder and faster. Talk about your feelings with a family member or friend.
- You may feel anxious or sad. This is common. Talk with your doctor if you feel sad, depressed or nervous most of the time.

## When to Call Your Doctor



- **Call 911 if you have:**
  - chest pain or pressure that does not get better after you take nitroglycerin
  - warning signs that do not get better when you rest.
- **Call your doctor if you have:**
  - increased shortness of breath, fatigue (tired) or energy loss
  - lightheadedness
  - heart palpitations, or irregular or fast heartbeat
  - rapid weight loss you can't explain
  - questions or concerns.

If you are not sure about what you are feeling, stop what you are doing. Call your clinic and ask to talk to a doctor or nurse.