

Know Your Enemy: Heart Attacks

Although some heart attacks come on suddenly and are intense, most begin slowly, with the only signs or symptoms being mild pain and/or discomfort. Many times, people experiencing a heart attack aren't sure what is wrong and wait too long before getting help – but once symptoms start, *minutes matter*.

Common Symptoms:

- *Chest Pain/Discomfort.*
- *Shortness of Breath.*
- *Profuse Sweating*
- *Lightheadedness*
- *Nausea*
- *Indigestion*

This list is not complete. Most heart attacks do include discomfort in the chest that generally lasts more than a couple minutes and can be described as a tightness, fullness, pressure or ache. Pain may also radiate to the neck, jaw, shoulder and back. However, many people can experience a heart attack with minimal symptoms. Those at a higher risk include people with a family history, people who smoke, and people with high blood pressure, high cholesterol or diabetes. Studies have also linked working a greater number of hours per day to a higher risk for heart attack.

So, not only for your life, but for those of the people sharing the road with you, it is important to know if you are at risk and to seek medical attention immediately if something does not feel normal. Learn the signs, and even if you are not sure that it is a heart attack, have it checked out. Especially in our industry, it is better to be safe than sorry!