

# Early Heart Attack Care



## EHAC Community Education

### Learn How To:

- Recognize and respond to the early symptoms of a heart attack
- Understand risk factors and atypical symptoms
- The three stages and how to respond
- Overcome a person's denial and reluctance to seek care
- Share the life saving message
- Understand why we compare heart attacks to cancer and other illnesses
- Meet our founder and understand how a heart attack changed his life





# EHAC Community Education

## Section 1: How Does A Heart Attack Happen?



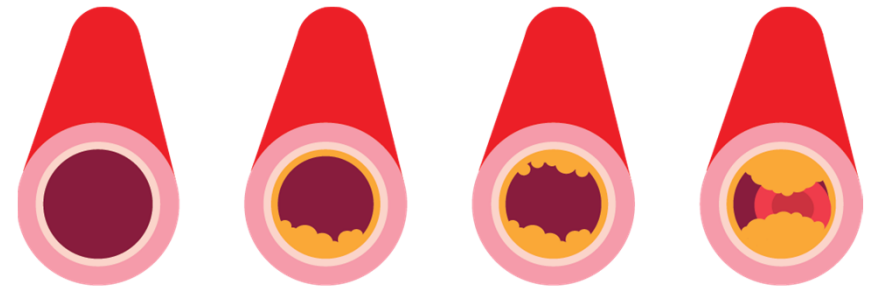
A heart attack happens because:

- Plaque grows within your blood vessels
- As the plaque builds, your body is still pushing the blood through your vessels – but it is working harder
- The pressure from the blood moving against the build-up will cause it to break free
- Two things happen. The body is trying to heal itself and it forms a clot inside of the vessel. The build-up and the clot create a blockage.
- The blockage prevents the blood from moving
- The heart slows until it stops

According to statistics:

- Every year approximately 805,000 Americans have a heart attack
- Of these, 605,000 are a first attack and 200,000 happen in people who have already had a heart attack
- Almost 50% may be unaware or don't act on early warning signs

*Note: Statistics provided by Centers for Disease Control.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm>*



Over time, **plaque** begins to form and it's harder for blood to flow throughout the body.

Imagine a scratch on your hand.  
The body will clot to stop the bleeding.  
But if the clot is in your blood vessels,  
it stops the flow to your heart.





# EHAC Community Education

## Section 2: There are Early Signs & Symptoms?



Yes, as a heart attack occurs, there can be early signs and symptoms. These mild symptoms **may come and go for hours or days before the chest pain becomes severe**. When treated early, prevention can take place to avert sudden death and cardiac damage. *Early recognition and response saves lives.*

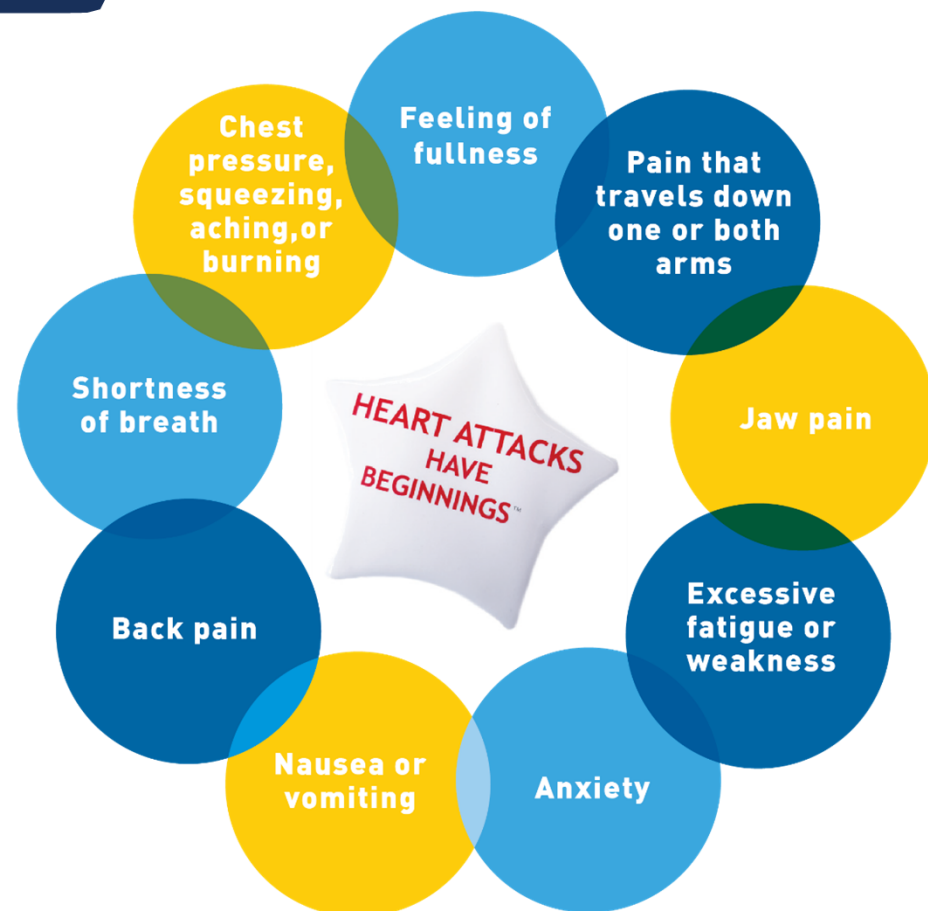
The Early Heart Attack Care (EHAC) education shares the early warning signs of a heart attack. These symptoms can be non-specific or specific.

### Specific Heart Attack Symptoms (PRODROMAL ANGINA)

- Chest discomfort, pressure
- Chest ache, burning
- Chest fullness

### Non-specific Heart Attack Symptoms

- Weakness
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Dizziness



As blood flow slows down, the heart begins to spasm which causes chest pain.





# EHAC Community Education

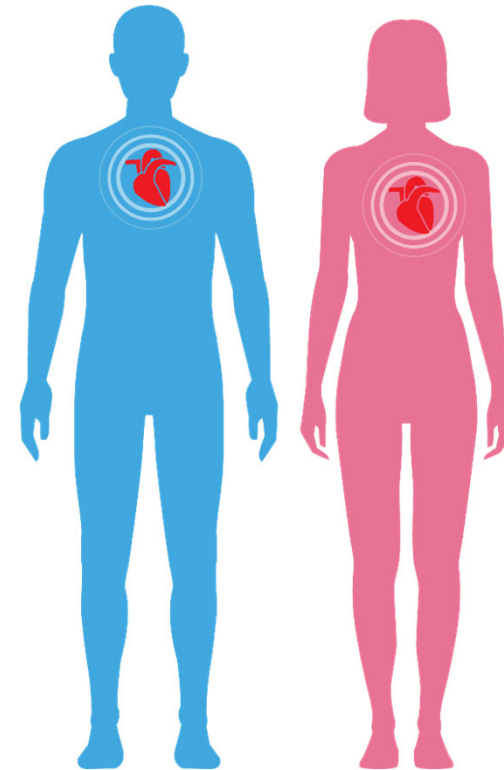
## EHAC SYMPTOMS

### Section 3: Symptoms in Men vs. Women



Heart attack symptoms can be different for men versus women. Although there is some debate on this topic, please be aware of these possible signs and seek medical care.

- Men may normally feel pain and numbness in the left arm or the side of the chest. In women, these symptoms may appear on the right side.
- Women may experience unexplained exhaustion, or feel drained, dizzy or nauseous.
- Women may feel upper back pain that travels up into their jaw.
- Women may think their stomach pain is the flu, heartburn or an ulcer.



Women may be less likely to seek medical care in the event of an emergency.





# EHAC Community Education

## Section 4: Understand Risk Factors & Atypical Symptoms



There are certain risk factors that can cause someone to have a heart attack:

- A family history of cardiovascular disease
- High blood pressure
- Overweight or obese
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Using tobacco products
- Metabolic disease, diabetes or other illnesses
- For women it can also include birth control pills, a history of pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes or having a low birthweight baby

In an atypical presentation, the signs and symptoms are different. How? The patient may not complain about pain or pressure in the chest. Be alert for the following:

- A sharp pain in the back or shoulder blade
- Pain that spreads above the jawbone or into the lower body
- Difficult or labored breathing



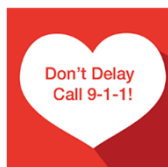
Pay attention to the subtle clues your body is sharing. Monitor your blood pressure and speak with your doctor about any changes. Early care matters!





# EHAC Community Education

## Section 5: Recognize & Respond



Recognition and response is critical to save heart muscle. There are three stages (or types) of a heart attack and the bystander must take the correct action.

**W|sh#4#** The heart attack stops you dead in your tracks. This is called the CPR scene. Call 9-1-1, immediately begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and deploy an AED.

Remember – push hard, push fast.

**W|sh#5#** A heart attack and early damage is taking place. The patient is experiencing intense chest pressure. Call 9-1-1 to summon help. Keep the patient calm because they are usually weak and may be confused.

**W|sh#6#** The heart attack is just beginning and EHAC provides a beneficial impact. This is the most difficult time to get someone to seek medical care. The victim will complain, but then excuse it as food poisoning or gas. The patient has minimal symptoms but is practicing maximum deniability. The patient-to-first-responder interaction can be frustrating.

**CPR**  
Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

### PERFORM CPR

**Check For Responsiveness**

- Is the person unresponsive and not breathing normally?

**Interlock Your Fingers & Place Your Hands Over The Heart**

**Push Hard & Fast**

- Push on the chest at a rate of 100 times per minute.
- Compress the chest at least 2 inches.
- Continue until medical help arrives, an AED is obtained, or the person becomes responsive.

**AED**  
Automated External Defibrillator

### DEPLOY AN AED

**Clear Clothing from Chest, Arms & Abdomen**

- Stop chest compressions to clear clothing.

**Apply the Pads as shown on the AED Diagram & Press the Power Button**

**Do Not Touch the Person while the Unit is Operating**

- Follow the verbal instructions or prompts.
- If the patient remains unresponsive after the AED unit completes the cycle, resume chest compressions.

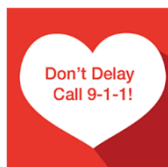
If you have a severe cramp in a leg muscle, you massage it to restore the blood flow. Your heart is a muscle. Restoring blood flow is critical to survival.





# EHAC Community Education

## Section 6: Overcome a Patient's Reluctance



The following are strategies to overcome denial and resistance to medical attention:

- Find out the most critical issue on the patient's mind. Offer to take care of that concern or ask a bystander.
- Suggest that the victim check out any early symptoms, no matter how mild they may seem.
- If the victim is anxious regarding a spouse or family member, offer to call them.
- Enlist family members or co-workers to help you.
- Try to relieve tension with appropriate humor.
- Be personal and persistent. Sit and talk - don't walk away.
- Congratulate the victim on his or her good judgment: "Great! Let's just get it checked."

### Unusual Behavior? Are you **Actively Listening**?

**Ask yourself:** "Why is my friend texting me about a pdf on my website?"

- Listen to your gut. **Your friend is really asking for help.**
- Their chest pressure turned into pain. **They are in danger.**
- "Old and Rickety." **Be alert for denial statements.**
- Stop Texting. **Call them.**
- Keep them calm. **Acknowledge it could be a heart attack.**
- **Call 9-1-1. Stay with them.**

The example above is a true story.







# EHAC Community Education

## Section 7: “Like Cancer or Other Illnesses, Heart Attacks Have Beginnings”



Why do we say this? Well, if your friend told you they had a lump in their breast, would you tell them to ignore it? Of course not.

Some will say not all heart attacks have early signs and symptoms. And we agree. But if you would encourage someone to seek medical care when they tell you about a suspicious lump, we encourage you to apply the same logic to a possible heart attack.

**CALL 9-1-1**  
**SURVIVE. DON'T DRIVE.**

If your neighbor's house was on fire, would you delay in calling the fire department? Of course not. Both are life-threatening events.







# EHAC Community Education

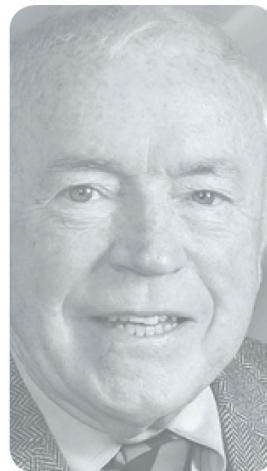
## Section 8: A Life-Changing Mission



Our founder, Dr. Raymond Bahr, was working as a pharmacist when he missed the chance to save a friend from a heart attack. After doing some research on heart attacks, Dr. Bahr found that the early signs and symptoms of a heart attack have been recognized for over 150 years in medical research.

Dr. Bahr switched his profession, became a cardiologist, started the EHAC education program and chest pain accreditation for hospitals.

"If a heart attack is diagnosed in the early stages, it is not a death sentence. Save a life (and even the quality of a life) by recognizing and responding in the event of an emergency."



**"Many people do not realize that EHAC began because I missed the chance to save a friend's life. Many people do not realize that this education became the foundation of the ACC Accreditation Services. But after 40 years, people know that EHAC education saves lives."**

Dr. Raymond D. Bahr  
Founder, Deputy Heart Attack Program,  
Early Heart Attack Care (EHAC) Education &  
ACC Accreditation Services.

