

Chronic Disease Prevention Bulletin

FEBRUARY 2006

Distributed by: Southeast Health District

1115-B Church Street, Waycross, GA



National Wear Red Day
Friday, February 3, 2006



National Heart Month

Cardiovascular Disease (CVD) continues to be the number 1 cause of death for both men and women. CVD includes all diseases of the heart and blood vessels, including ischemic heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, hypertensive disease and atherosclerosis. It's important to know the symptoms of a heart attack and "Act In Time".

Dial 9-1-1 Fast

Today heart attack and stroke victims can benefit from new medications and treatments unavailable to patients in years past that can stop some heart attacks and strokes in progress, reducing disability and saving lives. However, to be effective, these drugs must be given quickly after heart attack or stroke symptoms first appear. Don't delay -- get help right away!

Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense — the "movie heart attack," where no one doubts what's happening. But most heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- ◆ **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. 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.** May occur with or without chest discomfort.
- ◆ **Other signs:** These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness

As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

If you or someone you're with has chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other signs, don't wait longer than a few minutes (no more than 5) before calling for 9-1-1... Get to a hospital right away. Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment when they arrive -- up to an hour sooner than if someone gets to the hospital by car. Patients with chest pain who arrive by ambulance usually receive faster treatment at the hospital. If you can't access

the emergency medical services (EMS) have someone drive you to the hospital right away. If you're the one having symptoms, don't drive yourself, unless you have absolutely no other option.

Stroke Warning Signs

The American Stroke Association says these are the warning signs of stroke:

- ◆ Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- ◆ Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- ◆ Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- ◆ Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- ◆ Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

If you or someone with you has one or more of these signs, don't delay call 9-1-1 or the emergency medical services (EMS) number right away! Also, check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared. It's very important to take immediate action. If given within three hours of the start of stroke symptoms, a clot-busting drug can reduce long-term disability for the most common type of stroke.

Preventing Heart Disease

The lifestyles we choose can have a direct impact on heart disease development. The following are risk factors that can be controlled and/or modified to reduce your risks:

- ◆ **Be Smoke Free** – Quitting takes practice. The Georgia Quit Line is a toll free resource that offers counseling, resources, and support services for Georgians 13 years and older wanting to quit tobacco. Call 1-877-270-STOP (English) or 1-877-2NO-FUME (Spanish).
- ◆ **Get Checked** – Know cholesterol and blood pressure levels. Both cholesterol and blood pressure can be reduced through diet and exercise. Sometimes medication is needed. Discuss your number with your doctor to determine your risks for heart disease.
- ◆ **Be Active** – Regular physical activity can help you live longer and improve your quality of life. 30 minutes at least 5 days per week is recommended.
- ◆ **Eat Healthy** – Variety is important. Focus on a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. Eat in moderation.

Join DHR and the AHA at the
11th Annual Woman & Woman Conference
The Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, GA

Source: <http://www.americanheart.org>
<http://www.livehealthygeorgia.org>