Cardiac Maneuvers

What women should know about heart attack symptoms

March 1, 2011 By Katie Karlson

While women account for nearly half of all heart attack deaths, they're less likely than men to recognize the symptoms of a heart attack when it's happening to them, which delays getting treatment and may cost them their lives, according to the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute.

Men and women may experience different heart attack symptoms. Men experience the classic heart attack signs of pressure in the chest or a sense of tightness or constriction.
If a woman doesn't feel this, she might not connect her ailment to a heart attack, says Judith Hochman, director of the Cardiovascular Clinical Research Center at the New York University School of Medicine.

What are the female symptoms? Shortness of breath, profound fatigue (especially for elderly women), back pain and tightness in the neck. Nausea or vomiting may also signal the beginning of a heart attack. If you detect these symptoms—or the more classic ones—immediately dial 911. Don't drive yourself to the hospital or wait for the situation to subside (by then the damage will be done).

Though some cardiac disease risk is in the genes and is heightened by high cholesterol or diabetes, you can lower your risk with regular exercise and a balanced diet—healthful advice that crosses the gender divide.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/Cardiac-Maneuvers-Women-19971-2167