

What is exactly is “Myocardial Infarction” or “Heart Attack”

In order to fully understand the concepts of a heart attack, we must first understand the nature and physiology of the heart. The heart is quite special in that it never stops working, and it is the major pump that drives blood throughout our body. However, the heart is a muscle just like any other in the body. It’s own arteries (coronary arteries) supply it with oxygen-rich blood so that it can contract and push blood to the rest of the body. When there isn't enough oxygen flow to a muscle, its function begins to suffer. When the oxygen supply is blocked completely, just like any other muscle in the body, it too will begin to die. This is what happens in an event of a “myocardial infarction or heart attack.”

Causes and Risk factors:

As we age, plaque can build up along our coronary arteries and ends up in the narrowing of the channel through which blood flows to the heart. Plaque is made up of cholesterol buildup and eventually may calcify or harden, with calcium deposits. Risk factors for heart attack include; advanced age, increased cholesterol levels, diabetes, family history of heart disease, smoking, increased blood pressure and obesity.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Chest pain: described as tightness, heaviness, fullness or pressure on chest
- Shortness of Breath
- Extreme sweating
- Nausea
- Pain that radiates to shoulders, arm or jaw
- Atypical symptoms: indigestion

Diagnosis:

- EKG
- Blood tests: Cardiac enzymes -Troponin and CPK
- Chest x-ray

Treatment:

- Aspirin (if available, should be taken as soon as heart attack is suspected)
- Clot busting drugs
- Cardiac catheterization and angioplasty with stent placement
- Blood pressure lowering drugs
- Cholesterol lowering drugs

Here at Heart and Health we take the above symptoms very seriously. If you think that you may be experiencing a heart attack you should immediately go to the nearest Emergency room to be evaluated.

It is important to know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack, and awareness and early intervention could save your life. Remember, when it comes to heart attack, **TIME IS** (more important than money) **MYOCARDIUM** (medical term for heart muscle)!!

Reference: UpToDate.com

http://www.uptodate.com/contents/coronary-heart-disease-and-myocardial-infarction-in-young-men-and-women?source=search_result&selectedTitle=8%7E150