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How common is a heart attack?: According to the AHA (American Heart Association; based on statistics from 1996) 1.1 million new and recurrent heart attacks occur per year in the United States. There are about 800,000 new heart attack survivors per year, according to the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Following are additional important statistics provided by the AHA and NCHS:

- There are 12 million victims of angina, heart attack and other forms of coronary artery disease (CAD) living in the USA.
- 5.8 million are male and 6.1 million are female.
- Approximately 225,000 people die, including 125,000 who die suddenly or before they reach a hospital. Most of these deaths are due to lethal irregular heart beats.
- Heart Disease is the number one cause of death in the USA. This is followed by cancer, stroke, lung disease and accidents.
from 1986 to 1996 the death rate from CAD declined approximately 25%



What are the symptoms of a heart attack? A heart attack may be the first symptom of coronary artery disease in many patients. In others, it may be preceded by days, weeks, months or even years of angina.



Classic or commonest signals of a heart attack consists of pressure- like, squeezing, or tightness feeling in the center of the chest that may radiate or move to the left shoulder and arm. In some, it may move to both shoulders and arms, the jaw, or between the

shoulder blades in the back. If this is merely an angina warning, the symptom may go away in a few minutes and then return.

Once a coronary artery is totally blocked, a heart attack takes place and the chest discomfort becomes more intense and persistent. The chest discomfort or pain may be accompanied by shortness of breath, unexplained anxiety (a sense of impending doom), weakness, marked fatigue, cold sweats, paleness and a feeling of skipped heart beats. It must be recognized that only one or some of these symptoms may accompany the chest discomfort of heart attack. Also, the symptoms may not be typical in some cases and shortness of breath, cold sweats or marked and sudden fatigue may be the only symptom.



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