Heart Attacks Meeting Kit



WHAT IS A HEART ATTACK?

A heart attack, also called a **myocardial infarction**, happens when a part of the heart muscle doesn't get enough blood.

The more time that passes without treatment to restore blood flow, the greater the damage to the heart muscle.

Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the main cause of heart attack. A less common cause is a severe spasm, or sudden contraction, of a coronary artery that can stop blood flow to the heart muscle.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEART ATTACK?

The major symptoms of a heart attack are:

- Chest pain or discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center or left side of the chest that lasts for more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. The discomfort can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain.
- Feeling weak, light-headed, or faint. You may also break out into a cold sweat.
- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back.
- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms or shoulders.
- Shortness of breath. This often comes along with chest discomfort, but shortness of breath also can happen before chest discomfort.

HEART ATTACKS CAUSED BY ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The first type of heart attack involves some environmental aspect of the workplace that causes cardio-vascular deterioration (that eventually leads to a heart attack).

HEART ATTACKS CAUSED BY PHYSICAL WORK ACTIVITY

The second type of work-related heart attack is precipitated by some physical work activity, usually, but not necessarily, of a heavy physical nature.

HEART ATTACKS CAUSED BY EMOTIONAL FACTORS

The third type of heart attack is induced by emotional stress or excitement, including worry, fear, surprise, or anxiety. For example, a heart attack that occurs after a worker witnesses a tragic event or is yelled at by a superior may be

compensable under the law.

STRATEGIES TO PREVENT HEART DISEASE

1. **Don’t smoke or use tobacco**

Chemicals in tobacco can damage your heart and blood vessels. Cigarette smoke reduces the oxygen in your blood, which increases your blood pressure and heart rate because your heart has to work harder to supply enough oxygen to your body and brain.

2. **Get moving: Aim for at least 30 to 60 minutes of activity daily**

Regular, daily physical activity can lower your risk of heart disease. Physical activity helps you control your weight and reduce your chances of developing other conditions that may put a strain on your heart, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes.

You should aim for at least:

- 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic exercise, such as walking at a brisk pace
- 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity, such as running

3. **Eat a heart-healthy diet**

A healthy diet can help protect your heart, improve your blood pressure and cholesterol, and reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes. A heart-healthy eating plan includes:

- Vegetables and fruits
- Beans or other legumes
- Lean meats and fish
- Low-fat or fat-free dairy foods
- Whole grains
- Healthy fats, such as olive oil

4. **Maintain a healthy weight**

Being overweight — especially around your middle — increases your risk of heart disease. Excess weight can lead to conditions that increase your chances of developing heart disease — including high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes.

One way to see if your weight is healthy is to calculate your body mass index (BMI), which uses your height and weight to determine whether you have a healthy or unhealthy percentage of body fat. A BMI of 25 or higher is considered overweight and is generally associated with higher cholesterol, higher blood pressure, and an increased risk of heart disease and stroke.

5. **Get good quality sleep**

Most adults need at least seven hours of sleep each night. Make sleep a priority in your life. Set a sleep schedule and stick to it by going to bed and waking up at the same times each day. Keep your bedroom dark and quiet, so it’s easier to sleep.

6. **Manage stress**

Some people cope with stress in unhealthy ways — such as overeating, drinking or smoking. Finding alternative ways to manage stress — such as physical activity,

relaxation exercises or meditation – can help improve your health.

7. **Get regular health screenings**

High blood pressure and high cholesterol can damage your heart and blood vessels.

FINAL WORD

Take heart attack symptoms seriously. We know most of the people we work with pretty well. If something seems wrong talk to the person or get a supervisor involved. Know what your emergency response plan at your worksite for a medical emergency like a heart attack. Knowing who to call, what the address of the worksite is, and who is CPR trained onsite can save the victim’s life.