



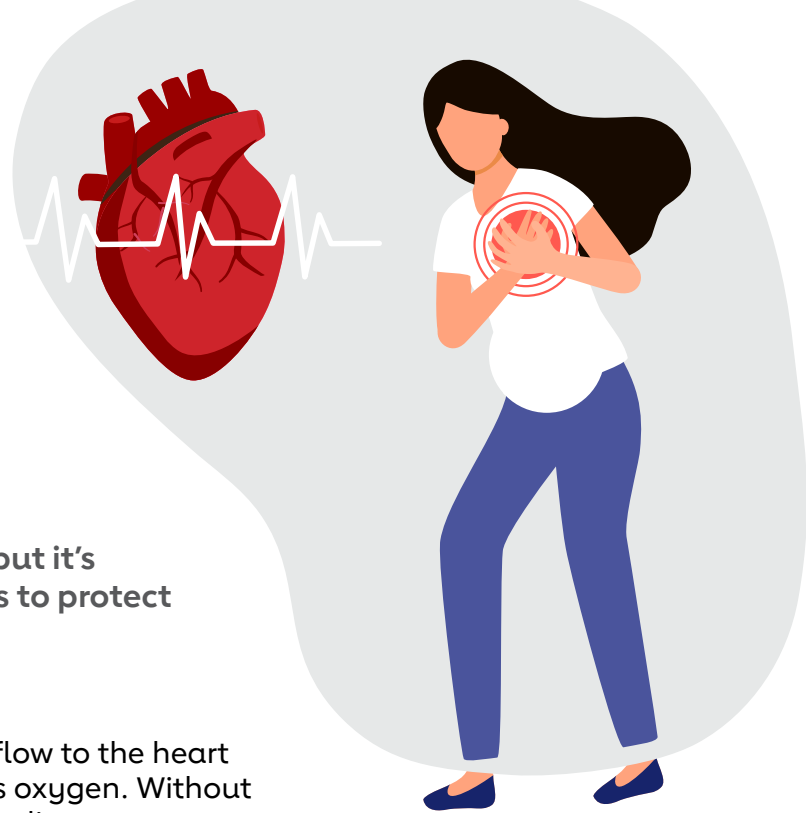
# Heart Attacks and Pregnancy

Heart attacks related to pregnancy are rare, but it's important to know the risks and warning signs to protect yourself and your baby.



## What is a Heart Attack?

A heart attack occurs when blood flow to the heart is reduced or blocked. Blood carries oxygen. Without oxygen, the heart muscle begins to die.



## Why Are Pregnant Woman at Risk of Heart Attack?

- ✓ Blood volume and heart rate increases. Your heart is working harder.
- ✓ Blood clots form more easily to prevent bleeding during and after delivery. These clots could block blood flow to vital organs, including the heart.
- ✓ Hormone levels are higher during pregnancy, which can affect blood vessels and arteries. A spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD), or a tear in the heart artery wall, can lead to a heart attack.
- ✓ Conditions like gestational hypertension and gestational diabetes can increase risk.

## It Can Happen Postpartum, Too

About half of pregnancy-related heart attacks occur in the postpartum period.

### Heart Attack Signs and Symptoms

- ✓ Chest pain - whether pressure, heaviness, or discomfort - is the most common sign of a heart attack.
- ✓ Other symptoms include pain in the jaw, neck, back, arms, or shoulders; weakness or dizziness; and shortness of breath.
- ✓ Women may also experience unusual fatigue, nausea, or vomiting.



**Seek Help Immediately** - Though pregnancy-related heart attacks are uncommon, they are on the rise. Talk with your health care professional about lowering your risk. If you think you are having a heart attack - **don't wait. Call 911.**

Learn more about:



**Pregnancy**  
[GoRedforWomen.org/Pregnancy](https://www.GoRedforWomen.org/Pregnancy)



**Postpartum**  
[GoRedforWomen.org/Postpartum](https://www.GoRedforWomen.org/Postpartum)