Heart attack and stroke are life-or-death emergencies — every second counts. If you think you or someone you’re with has any symptoms of heart attack or stroke, call 911 immediately.

For a stroke, also note the time when the first symptom(s) appeared. A clot-busting drug received within 3 to 4.5 hours of the start of symptoms may improve your chances of getting better faster.

Heart attack and stroke symptoms can appear suddenly or slowly, so it’s important to know the signs of both conditions.

Heart Attack Warning Signs

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense, but most of them start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. The warning signs are:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** This may occur with or without chest discomfort.

As with men, women’s most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting and back or jaw pain.

Stroke Warning Signs

The acronym F.A.S.T. is an easy way to recognize and respond to the sudden warning signs of stroke. The letters stand for:

- **Face drooping** — Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop or is it numb?
- **Speech difficulty** — Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence such as, “The sky is blue.” Is the sentence repeated correctly? Are they unable to speak, or are they hard to understand?

The American Heart Association and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute are working together for women, for healthy hearts.

**GoRedForWomen.org**

© Copyright 2019 American Heart Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit. All rights reserved. Go Red for Women is a registered trademark of AHA. The Red Dress Design is a trademark of U.S. DHHS. Unauthorized use prohibited. DS15024 8/19