

## KNOW THE SIGNS

HEART ATTACK, STROKE,  
AND CARDIAC ARREST

### HEART ATTACK:

- CHEST DISCOMFORT
- ARM, BACK, NECK OR JAW PAIN
- TROUBLE BREATHING
- SWEATING, NAUSEA,
- LIGHTHEADEDNESS

### STROKE (FAST):

- FACE DROOPING
- ARM WEAKNESS
- SPEECH DIFFICULTY
- TIME TO CALL 9-1-1

### CARDIAC ARREST:

- SUDDEN LOSS OF RESPONSIVENESS
- NO NORMAL BREATHING-BEGIN  
HANDS ONLY CPR; CALL 9-1-1 FOR  
HELP, USE AN AED

## How can you help?

### ***Learn CPR!***

To find a CPR class near you contact  
your local Rescue Squad, Hospital, or  
use one of the links below.

[www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org)

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)



Rappahannock EMS Council  
250 Executive Center Parkway  
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Phone: 540-373-0249  
Fax: 540-373-0536

[www.rems.vaems.org](http://www.rems.vaems.org)



Virginia HEARTSafe illustration by Madison N. Baxter  
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# VIRGINIA *HEARTSafe* COMMUNITY

- Who in your community knows CPR?
- Do you know what an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is?
- Can you recognize the signs and symptoms of a heart attack?
- Can you recognize the signs and symptoms of a stroke?



## More about Heart Attack

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense—like the “movie heart attack” where there is no doubt what is happening. Most heart attacks start slowly with mild pain and discomfort. Often people effected are not sure what is wrong on and wait too long before getting help.

Immediately call 9-1-1 or your emergency response number so an ambulance (ideally with advanced life support) can be sent for you. As with men, women's most common heart attack symptom is chest pain or discomfort. But women are somewhat more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, and back or jaw pain.

Learn the signs, but remember this: Even if you're not sure it's a heart attack, have it checked out (tell a doctor about your symptoms). Minutes really matter! Fast action can save lives — maybe your own. Don't wait more than five minutes to call 9-1-1 or your emergency response number.

## More about Stroke

Immediately call 9-1-1 or the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) number so an ambulance can be sent. Also, check the time so you'll know when the first symptoms appeared. A clot-busting drug called tissue plasminogen activator (tPA) may improve the chances of getting better but only if you get them help right away.

A TIA or transient ischemic attack is a "warning stroke" or "mini-stroke" that produces stroke-like symptoms. TIA symptoms usually only last a few minutes but, if left untreated, people who have TIAs have a high risk of stroke. Recognizing and treating TIAs can reduce the risk of a major stroke.

### Beyond F.A.S.T. – Other Symptoms You Should Know

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the leg
- Sudden confusion or trouble understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause

## More about Cardiac Arrest

Cardiac arrest, also known as sudden cardiac arrest, is the abrupt loss of heart function in a person who may or may not have diagnosed heart disease. The time and mode of death are unexpected. It occurs instantly or shortly after symptoms appear.

Each year, nearly 360,000 emergency medical services-assessed out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the United States.

Cardiac arrest is caused when the heart's electrical system malfunctions. Death results when the heart suddenly stops working properly. This may be caused by abnormal or irregular heart rhythms (called arrhythmias). A common arrhythmia in cardiac arrest is ventricular fibrillation. This is when the heart's lower chambers suddenly start beating chaotically and don't pump blood. Death occurs within minutes after the heart stops. Cardiac arrest may be reversed if CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is performed and a defibrillator is used to shock the heart and restore a normal heart rhythm within a few minutes.

