



Preventing a second heart attack

Having one heart attack doesn't mean you are sure to have another. You can help prevent a second attack using this advice from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute:

- 1.** Ask your doctor about a cardiac rehabilitation program. You will learn how to exercise safely and find ways to reduce your risk for future heart problems.
- 2.** Make lifestyle changes if needed. You may be advised to quit smoking, lose weight, increase exercise, and adopt a heart-healthy diet that is low in fat and sodium.
- 3.** Take medicines as your doctor directs. Most people who have had heart attacks take medicines daily—to avoid blood clots and reduce the heart's workload, for example.
- 4.** Monitor and control risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.
- 5.** Know the signs of a heart attack. Be aware that symptoms vary from person to person. Also, your symptoms for a second attack may not be the same as

for the first. And some people have no symptoms.

Symptoms may include uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain in the center of the chest; pain, discomfort, or numbness in one or

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both arms or in the back, neck, jaw, or stomach; shortness of breath; a cold sweat; nausea and vomiting; and dizziness.

If in doubt, call 911.

- 6.** Prepare for a heart attack emergency. Give your family members information on:
 - How to administer nitroglycerin, a medicine that relaxes blood vessels, allowing blood and oxygen to reach the heart and reduce its workload
 - How to access emergency medical services, such as 911
 - How to find the nearest hospital that offers 24-hour emergency heart care