



HEART ATTACK

Bromley

Well

HEALTH FACT SHEET

Updated December 2025

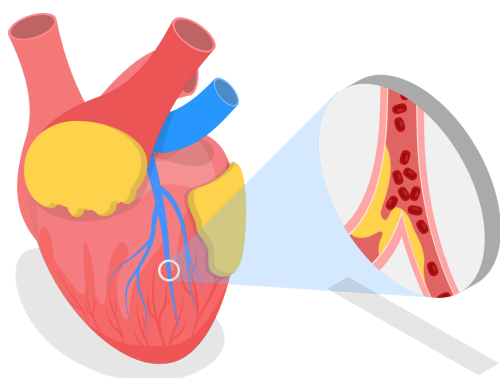
What is a heart attack?

A heart attack is a life-threatening medical condition that occurs when the blood flow that brings oxygen to the heart is suddenly blocked, usually by a blood clot. A lack of blood to the heart may seriously damage the heart muscle.

What are the symptoms?

Don't delay! Call 999 for an ambulance immediately if you have:

- Chest pain – a sensation of tightness, heaviness, pain or a burning feeling in the centre of your chest
- Pain in other parts of the body Pain may radiate from chest to arm, jaw, back and abdomen
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating
- Feeling light-headed or dizzy
- Feeling nauseous and vomiting



SELF CARE TIPS

STOP SMOKING

Smoking can increase the risk of plaque building up in your arteries. Plaque increases the risk of clots that can block your arteries.

DIET

Certain foods can increase your risk of coronary heart disease. Reducing the amount of saturated fats, eating a high-fibre diet including whole grains, plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and increasing omega 3 intake can reduce your risk of developing it. It may be worth considering managing your weight if you are obese.

To register with Bromley Well:
Freephone 0808 278 7898
Or register online:
www.bromleywell.org.uk/refer

Contact Lifestyle Support direct
07985 431484 / 07985 444210
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What are the causes?

Coronary heart disease (CHD) is one of the main causes of heart attacks. In CHD, blood vessels that supply the heart with blood (coronary arteries) get clogged up with deposits of cholesterol called plaques. These plaques may burst, causing a blood clot to develop. The clot may block blood supply to the heart, triggering a heart attack.

Your risk of developing coronary heart disease is increased by:

- Smoking
- A high fat diet
- Diabetes
- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Being overweight or obese

What about treatment?

Treatment is dependant on the severity of the heart attack. It is ideal if you are having any kind of heart attack for you to have an angiogram, which is a minimally invasive procedure to look at the health of the arteries to decide on treatment. Sometimes they will proceed with putting a stent in to open the arteries affected. Or they may prescribe cholesterol and blood-thinning medication that can help break down the clots and prevent further build-up. If you have to wait to have a stent, they may prescribe blood-thinning medication to help break down the clots and reduce the symptoms prior to investigation.

SELF CARE TIPS

KEEPING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

Keeping physically active increases the efficiency of the heart and reduces blood pressure which helps with heart health. Physical activity is also known to regulate blood sugars and increase HDL cholesterol or "good" cholesterol. Simply getting up and moving every now and then, rather than living a sedentary lifestyle, can help.

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Some myths

Myth 1: If you have had a heart attack, you cannot exercise

Untrue! After any cardiac event, activity can help with increasing heart health. Of course, it is recommended that you start slowly and try to build up stamina by gradually increasing the frequency and/or intensity of your exercise. You may also be recommended to do cardiac rehab, which may include an exercise programme run by healthcare professionals. If you were active before your cardiac event, it is still recommended to take it slow and discuss with your healthcare team before increasing the intensity of your exercise.

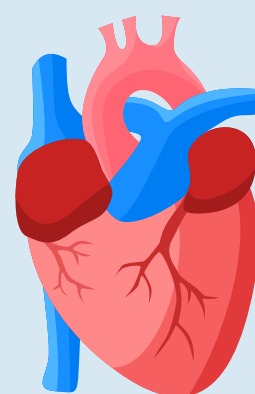
Myth 2: Only people who have a high BMI are at risk of a heart attack

No, that is not true! Being overweight can increase visceral fat and cholesterol in the body and therefore be a risk factor for heart attacks. However, genetic factors can cause high cholesterol in people of a lower BMI. If you have a family history of heart disease or heart attacks, especially in those under 55, you may want to ask your GP to get your cholesterol levels checked.

SELF CARE TIPS

REDUCING CHRONIC STRESS

It is not possible to remove all stresses from our life. However, chronic stress has a negative effect on our cardiovascular system. Practicing relaxation techniques, like mindfulness, and incorporating self-care activities into your daily routine can help. This could include things like seeing friends, having a bath or taking time for a hobby you enjoy.



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FURTHER RESOURCES

British Heart Foundation

**Help Line : 0808 802 1234 and
0300 330 3311**

Email: heretohelp@bhf.org.uk

<http://www.bhf.org.uk>

A national charity providing information and advice for the public and for health professionals. A really useful site containing lifestyle advice, the latest research and information about tests and treatments. There are also British Heart Foundation support groups that are listed on the website.

Heart UK

www.heartuk.org.uk

National cholesterol charity providing support and advice for people concerned about cholesterol. A great website packed with advice on healthy eating and maintaining a healthy weight, including recipe ideas and diet plans.

NHS Conditions Heart Attack

www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-attack/

NHS conditions pages contain information about the causes, symptoms and prevention and treatment of heart attacks.

References: NHS conditions www.nhs.uk/conditions/heart-attack/
British Heart Foundation www.bhf.org.uk/information/support/conditions/heart-attack

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