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Heart Attack and Stroke

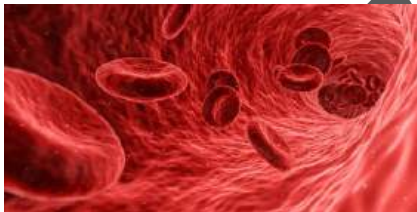


What Is a Heart Attack?

Heart attack, or myocardial infarction, occurs when part of the heart becomes blocked. This blockage prevents blood, and thus oxygen, from reaching that part of the heart. Lack of oxygen can kill heart muscle.

Did You Know?

Each person's heart is a different size, you can estimate how big yours is by holding your hands together.



Blockage in arteries causes heart attacks.

Why Do Heart Attacks Occur?

The main cause of heart attacks is **coronary heart disease**. This occurs when plaque, a waxy substance, builds up within **arteries**, vessels that deliver blood to the heart. This build-up happens over several years. When plaque breaks apart, a blood clot develops on top of the plaque. A large clot can block an entire artery, preventing blood flow to the part of the heart serviced by that artery. Heart attacks can also be caused by **coronary artery spasms**, but this is less common. These occur when an artery tightens so much that it prevents blood flow. The reasons for such spasms are not clear but they may be related to cigarettes and other drugs, stress, pain, or extreme cold.

What Is a Stroke?

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What Are the Different Kinds of Strokes?

There are two types of stroke: **ischemic** and **hemorrhagic**. An ischemic stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks a vessel taking blood to the brain. This prevents blood from flowing into the brain. Around 87% of strokes are ischemic and most of those are caused by high blood pressure. There are two types of ischemic stroke: **embolic** and **thrombotic**. Embolic strokes occur when a

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hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a vessel in the brain leaks or an aneurysm bursts, which causes blood flow in the brain to decrease. It also causes swelling in the brain which harms brain tissue. Hemorrhagic strokes are much less common than ischemic, accounting for only 15% of all strokes. However, they are usually deadly, comprising around 40% of stroke deaths.



A hemorrhagic stroke occurs when a blood vessel within the brain leaks.



Smoking can increase the risk of heart attack and stroke.

What Increases the Risk of Heart Attack and Stroke?

Despite the difference between these two health conditions, the risks of both are increased by the same things. These include family history, abnormal heart rhythm, a low-activity lifestyle, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol.

What Are the Signs of Heart Attack and Stroke?

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Stroke symptoms occur suddenly. They include feelings of numbness or weakness in the face, arm, or leg, usually on one side of the body; confusion; trouble speaking; difficulty seeing; difficulty walking; loss of balance or coordination; dizziness; and extreme headache.

What Should You Do?

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Reading Comprehension Questions:

1. What is a heart attack?
2. What is
3. Why do
4. What are the two different types of strokes?
5. What are three

Extension Questions:

6. List four
7. Create an

Reading Comprehension Questions KEY:

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References

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