

The heart requires oxygen to function. Without it, the amount of blood pumped around the body will be compromised. Not only are the cells in the heart in danger of severe damage, but also those contained in the rest of the body. For this reason, any heart related problem that has not been assessed by a Health Professional should be considered a Medical Emergency.

Acute Myocardial Infarction / Heart Attack

The heart needs oxygen to function. Acute Myocardial Infarction (heart attack) is caused by a severe constriction or a total blockage of the cardiac vessels. The death of the cardiac muscle (myocardium) occurs as a result of oxygen deprivation.

It is essential that an Ambulance be called so that treatment is started immediately to minimise or reverse the damage to the heart muscle.

Signs and Symptoms may include:

- Sudden onset of pain with or without exertion.
- Constant, intense, heavy vice like pain in the chest.
- Pain may radiate down the arms, neck, or jaw.
- Breathlessness
- Pulse may be irregular, fast, slow or normal, strong or weak.
- Skin may be pale, cold and sweaty – shock is occurring.
- Nausea or vomiting may occur.
- Medication does not relieve the pain.

Treatment:

Follow the [Basic First Aid Plan](#) to assess the casualty

- ✓ Call 000 or (112 mobile) for an Ambulance
- ✓ Reassure casualty
- ✓ Rest casualty in a semi-sitting position unless they are feeling faint
- ✓ Casualty should administer own medication
- ✓ Monitor vital signs
- ✓ Current medical opinion states that whilst waiting for the ambulance the casualty may elect to chew one aspirin tablet (300mg), if they are not allergic to aspirin. This may help diminish the amount of damage to the heart muscle. The ambulance officers will administer aspirin if the casualty has not taken aspirin prior to their arrival.



If the casualty does not receive urgent medical help, they could die

If an Ambulance is required - call immediately - do not delay

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