

HEART ATTACK, THE SILENT KILLER

TOP TIPS ON SAVING LIVES FROM A HEART ATTACK!



In the last one year itself the world has been witness to news about shocking and sometimes fatal heart attacks of several celebrities ranging from popular Bollywood and Hollywood stars to global sports icons. The biggest paradox was that many of them had a regular physical fitness routine and some either died after a work-out session or during a treadmill walk at the gym. This is a clear indicator that a heart attack can happen anytime, anywhere, without any warning!



Dr Brajesh Mittal, leading interventional cardiologist of UAE and Deputy Medical Director of Medcare Hospital, Convenor of the annual SHAKE Heart 2023 Conference, that concluded in Dubai on March 16-17, highlighted preventive steps to save lives from heart attacks.

For educating readers, let us first understand the basics about heart diseases.

WHAT IS A HEART ATTACK?

Myocardial Infarction (MI) is the medical term for heart attacks where the sudden block in one of the leading arteries to the heart, blocks blood supply and damages the heart muscle. Damage

to the heart muscle leads to poor pumping of the heart and/or fast heart rhythm which could cause dizziness or loss of consciousness.

Dr Mittal elaborated, “In the UAE, most of the heart attacks occur in people under 50 years of age and a lack of awareness has led to a high incidence of heart disease in the population. It is said, ‘Time is Muscle’ and maximum deaths and long-term damage in heart attacks occurs because patients have not been taken care of in the right time.”



HOW TO PREVENT HEART ATTACKS?

TYPICAL SYMPTOMS

While heart attacks can occur silently without symptoms too, the most common indicators are:

- pain or pressure in the chest region,
- pain in the arm, jaw, and the feeling of nausea.

WHAT IS CVD?

Cardiovascular disease is an umbrella term that encompasses all heart diseases, and these include stroke, heart failure, heart attacks or myocardial infarction, arrhythmia or irregular heartbeats, Coronary Artery Disease (CAD) induced by high cholesterol that gets deposited as plaque in arteries.

IS THERE A HIGHER RATE OF HEART DISEASE AMONGST ASIANS?

As per latest studies conducted the role of ethnicity in the incidence of heart disease is indicated. Also, in the UAE, nearly 30 per cent of deaths are occurring due to heart attacks and the average age for onset of CVD is 10 years earlier than the world average.

TOP SIX REASONS FOR EARLY ONSET OF HEART DISEASE

- 1 Hereditary factors and ethnicity where heart disease runs in the family.
- 2 High incidence of smoking that leads to atherosclerosis or build-up of plaque the arteries resulting in heart attacks
- 3 Abdominal obesity
- 4 Presence of chronic lifestyle diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and high cholesterol
- 5 Following of a car-to-carpet sedentary lifestyle with little or no physical fitness schedule.
- 6 Poor nutrition with high rate of consumption of trans fats and processed foods with high sugars and preservatives.

- 1 Go in for an annual heart screening after the age of 40 years or even earlier. In cases where there is a family history of heart disease, it is advisable to undergo regular heart health check from the age as directed by the physician.
- 2 Include a regular fitness regimen in your daily schedule, maintain a healthy waist-hip ratio. Minimize abdominal fat, which is one of the key prerequisites in maintaining good heart health.
- 3 Follow sound dietary advice, cut back on saturated, trans fats and sugar in your food, choose healthy, wholesome food, such as dense carbohydrates, fresh fruits and vegetables, garden greens, healthy white meat such a fish and eat small portions.
- 4 Avoid any fitness enhancing medicines that are easily available in the grey market. These cause a sudden spike in testosterone levels and put unnatural burden on the heart.
- 5 It is necessary to increase the healthy component in your cholesterol make up i.e., High Density Lipoprotein (HDL). This can be achieved mainly by high standards of physical fitness levels through exercise. It is equally important to reduce the unhealthy component i.e., is Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and triglycerides.
- 6 Quit smoking and reduce excessive consumption of alcohol as both can trigger hypertension, plaque build-up and push your chances of early onset of CVD.
- 7 Try and keep stress levels low. Practice deep breathing, meditation and decompress to reduce stress hormones such as cortisol in blood.
- 8 If your family has a history of diabetes, obesity and other metabolic disorders, make sure to keep to healthy weight limits to minimise chances of developing chronic disease.
- 9 Opt for regular heart check-ups; reduce the fat ratio in the blood.
- 10 Maintain body weight at a steady level and build lean muscle in the body.

HOW TO SAVE LIFE OF A PATIENT HAVING A HEART ATTACK.

Call an ambulance as soon as you see a patient experiencing a bout of sweating, dizziness or complaining of chest pain.

If you are the victim, do not drive to the hospital, take a cab, or call an ambulance.

Reach the emergency room as fast as possible to minimise damage to the heart muscle.

Give an aspirin to the patient as this can help in dissolution of the potential blockage.

Loosen the clothing of the patient, allow him to lie down, open the windows and

keep circulation of air around him.

If anyone knows Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), use that, making about 100 compressions, a minute, on the chest of the patient if he loses consciousness.

In case a patient undergoes a heart attack in a public place, the bystanders who know CPR can administer that or locate the defibrillator device. This device has been made available at all public places. Locate trained personnel who can deliver the required shock to re-start the heart, which can be lifesaving, until the arrival of the ambulance. **H**