



**St. John Ambulance**

**SAVING LIVES**  
at work, home and play

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**St. John Ambulance Wants You.**

**to be able to Recognize a Heart Attack When You See One**

**March 2011 (Mississauga, ON)** – Heart disease is one of the top killers of Canadians. According to the latest data from Statistics Canada, more than 69,000 people died of cardiovascular diseases. Chances of survival decrease drastically the longer a person waits to get medical attention. St. John Ambulance wants you to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of heart attack.

Signs and Symptoms of Angina and/or a Heart Attack:

- Pain that can be described as heaviness, tightness, squeezing, pressure, crushing, indigestion, aching jaw, sore arms, or upper back pain
- Pale skin
- Sweating
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Shock

If you suspect a person is having a heart attack, begin First Aid.

- Get medical help immediately. If you must leave the casualty alone, make sure to place them at rest before you go.
- Place the casualty at rest in a comfortable position; in most cases, the semi-sitting position is best. This will help take stress off the heart
- Make the casualty comfortable. Loosen tight clothing around the neck, chest and waist. Do your best to reassure them and reduce their fear – anxiety can cause more stress on the heart.
- If the casualty has prescribed medication and has asked for your assistance, assist them to take their medication. If they don't have medication, or the medication does not work after the dose, ask if they are able to take an Acetylsalicylic Acid (ASA) pill (such as Aspirin) and have them chew one regular strength adult ASA tablet.
- If they should lose consciousness and stop breathing, begin CPR.

On average, heart attack casualties take 4½ hours to get to a hospital from the onset of symptoms. The main reason for this delay is that it takes people a long time to accept something serious is wrong. If you suspect a heart attack, seek medical attention immediately. The sooner you get help, the better your chances of survival.