Heart disease is a major health problem. Every year, about 715,000 Americans have a heart attack. About 600,000 people die from heart disease in the United States each year—that’s 1 out of every 4 deaths. Heart disease is the leading cause of death for both men and women.¹

Classic heart attack symptoms...
The five major symptoms of a heart attack are:

- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck or back.
- Feeling weak, light-headed or faint.
- Chest pain or discomfort.
- Pain or discomfort in arms or shoulder.
- Shortness of breath

Common symptoms are different with nausea and vomiting or neck pain being an important early sign. A heart attack may occur without any pain. Unexplained shortness of breath, especially when not associated with exercise, may be a symptom.

Facts on Women and Heart Disease...

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women in the United States, killing 292,188 women in 2009—that’s 1 in every 4 female deaths.
- Although heart disease is sometimes thought of as a "man's disease," around the same number of women and men die each year of heart disease in the United States. Despite increases in awareness over the past decade, only 54% of women recognize that heart disease is their number 1 killer.²
- Heart disease is the leading cause of death for African American and white women in the United States. Among Hispanic women, heart disease and cancer cause roughly the same number of deaths each year. For American Indian or Alaska Native and Asian or Pacific Islander women, heart disease is second only to cancer.
- About 5.8% of all white women, 7.6% of black women, and 5.6% of Mexican American women have coronary heart disease.
- Almost two-thirds (64%) of women who die suddenly of coronary heart disease have no previous symptoms.³ Even if you have no symptoms, you may still be at risk for heart disease.
Chest pain may also be caused by other conditions that may involve the respiratory or musculoskeletal systems. When not sure, you should seek prompt medical evaluation. Testing can rule out an acute cardiac condition.

Prevention is the key to a healthy heart. Major risk factors include:

- Smoking,
- Obesity,
- Hypertension,
- High cholesterol and
- Lack of regular exercise.

You need to be an advocate for your heart health and work closely with your family physician to maximize your medical care.

**What to do if you suspect a heart attack...**

If you think you or someone you know is having a heart attack, you should:

- Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- CHEW an adult aspirin immediately.