

# Heart Attack (HA)

When not enough blood reaches the heart

## What is it?

### *What is a heart attack?*

The heart, similar to any other part of the body, continually needs a supply of oxygen provided by blood. A heart attack occurs when blood flow to the heart is reduced because of the formation of a clot, which results in damage to the heart.

### *What puts you at risk for a heart attack?*

The major risk factors are:

- High blood pressure
- Diabetes
- Lack of exercise
- High cholesterol
- Obesity

### *What are symptoms of a heart attack?*

1) Chest pain that is...

- Worse with exertion i.e. climbing up the stairs

- Radiates to jaw, and both arms or shoulders

- Lasts greater than 20 minutes

2) Shortness of breath

3) Sweating

4) Nausea and or vomiting

## What will it do?

### *How is a heart attack treated?*

1) If your heart attack was **not a complete blockage** of your heart's blood supply, then doctors will often treat with **medications** to thin the blood.

2) If there is **one specific area** of narrowing in the blood vessel – then doctors will use a **balloon and stent** to open the area. The stent and balloon are meant to increase blood flow to that specific area of the heart.

3) If there are **multiple blockages** – doctors will consider doing a **coronary artery bypass surgery** to go around the blocked area. This involves taking blood vessels from elsewhere in your body (e.g. thigh) and using them for your heart to form a new blood supply.

### *What are my medications?*

Medications for a heart attack depend on the severity; however, most therapy options focus on **prevention** of future clots and **reducing stress** on the heart.

## What happens over time?

### *What are the long-term complications?*

- **Reduced heart function** – when heart muscles stop receiving oxygen, they lose their ability to pump as effectively.
- **Irregular heart beat (arrhythmia)** – Following a heart attack, the wiring in your heart that transmits electricity to cause the muscle to contract can be damaged. After a heart attack this wiring can "Short out" and this can cause an abnormal heart rhythm known as an arrhythmia.
- **Stroke** – after the heart is damaged a clot can form in the heart. If that clot travels to the brain it can cause a stroke.

**It is important to follow up regularly with your family doctor, specialists and**

**Still have questions? Ask us @ [teachandlearnfm.com](http://teachandlearnfm.com)**

# Heart Attack (HA)

*When not enough blood reaches the heart*

**Patient-doctor learning area:** Use this area to write down questions for your doctor or use it as a space for your doctor to answer your questions.



**Still have questions? Ask us @ [teachandlearnfm.com](https://teachandlearnfm.com)**