



# Heart attack



## The facts!

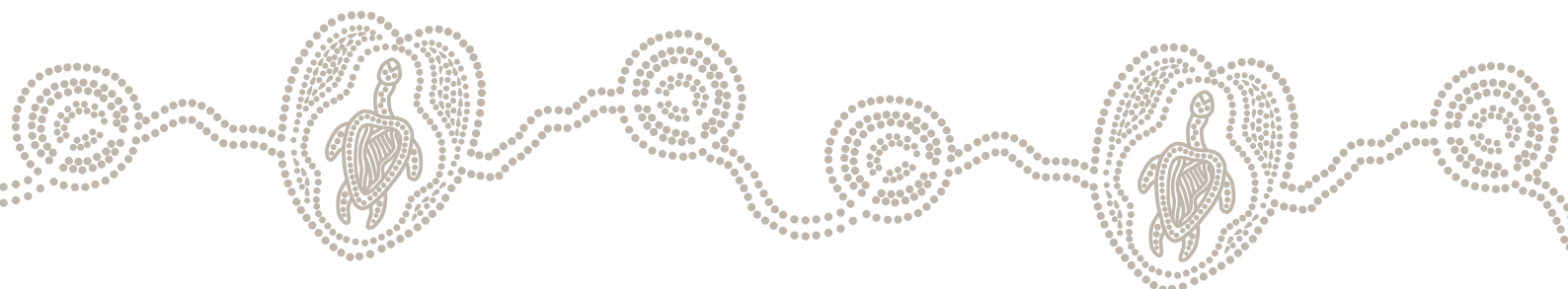
If you have a heart attack, acting fast can save your life and reduce the damage to your heart.

Treatments for a heart attack must be given fast – within one hour of the start of symptoms.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are almost three times more likely to have a heart attack than other Australians. Too many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have died because they did not recognise the warning signs.

## What is a heart attack?

- The heart pumps oxygen and blood to all parts of the body.
- Blood is supplied to the heart through the coronary arteries (blood vessels).
- In heart disease, fatty material (cholesterol) builds up in the coronary arteries, making it more difficult for blood to get through. This is called atherosclerosis.
- A heart attack usually begins when the fatty material completely blocks the blood flow to the heart muscle.
- This is very dangerous as the muscle could die if it has no blood flow to it.





## What are the warning signs of a heart attack?

- A squeezing, pressure, heavy or tight feeling in the chest area
- Discomfort in the neck, arm/s, shoulder/s, jaw or back



- You may also feel:
  - short of breath
  - sick in the stomach
  - dizzy or light-headed
  - sweaty, cold and clammy

## Reduce your risk of a heart attack

- Stop smoking
- Maintain a normal blood pressure (between 120/80 mmHg and 130/80 mmHg)
- Have your cholesterol checked
- Increase physical activity – aim for 30 minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity every day of the week

## What to do if you think you are having a heart attack

If you experience any of the warning signs:

1. **STOP** – and rest now.
2. **TALK** – tell someone how you feel.

If any of your symptoms:

- are severe
  - get worse quickly
  - last 10 minutes
3. **CALL Triple Zero (000)\***. Ask for an ambulance.

\* If calling Triple Zero (000) does not work on your mobile phone, try 112.

- Tell the operator if you think you are having a heart attack.
- Do not drive yourself.
- If you are not sure, there is no shame in calling for an ambulance – get help.

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