

HOW TO SAVE YOURSELF IF YOU ARE HAVING A HEART ATTACK

1 Chew aspirin.

As soon as you suspect a heart attack, thoroughly chew and swallow one 325-mg aspirin tablet, or four 81-mg baby aspirins. For best effect, do not swallow the aspirin whole. Heart attacks occur when the blood vessels supplying oxygen to the heart muscle become clogged. Aspirin will not stop the heart attack or remove the blockage, but it will prevent blood clotting cells (platelets) from adding to the blockage.

2 Alert others.

If possible, tell people around you that you are having a heart attack. Instruct them to call emergency services.

3 Decrease the heart's oxygen consumption.

Stop all activity. The faster your heart pumps, the more oxygen it uses up. Think calming thoughts about bringing your heart rate down to one beat per second. If you have a watch with a second hand, focus on the second hand. For each second think or say quietly "heart-beat." Repeat.

4 Increase oxygen delivery to the heart.

Lie down on the ground. Elevate your legs to keep as much blood pooled around your heart as possible; this will decrease the work your heart must do to pump blood. Open the windows to increase the room's oxygen level. If you have access to an oxygen tank, place the nasal cannula under your nose, turn the knob to 4 liters (or until you feel air coming through the nasal prongs), and take deep, slow breaths through your nose and out your mouth.

5 Perform cough-CPR.

Breathe, then cough every three seconds. Take a breath in through your nose, think "heart-beat, heart-beat, heart-beat," then cough. Repeat. Coughing will deter fainting and help you stay conscious until conventional CPR can be administered.

Be Aware

Do not consume food or water. You may need a hospital procedure to "unclog" your arteries, and food or liquids in your system complicate treatment.