

# After a Heart Attack: What to do for my health

**What is a heart attack?** A heart attack, also called myocardial infarction, is when one of the arteries supplying blood to the heart gets blocked. The part of the heart that gets blood from that artery is damaged. The longer the artery is blocked, the bigger the heart attack.

## Watch for Signs of a Heart Attack

- ☐ I know what to watch for:
  - pain, pressure, or discomfort in the chest, arms, back, neck, or jaw
  - shortness of breath
  - feeling sick to the stomach, throwing up, burping, or heartburn
  - sweating, or cold, clammy skin
  - a racing or uneven heartbeat
  - feeling dizzy or lightheaded

- ☐ If I have any of these signs and they do not go away with rest or medication, I might be having a heart attack.

I will call **9-1-1** right away.

**\*I won't go to the hospital on my own.**



- ☐ I know how to treat heart attack signs.

**Nitroglycerine (Emergency Angina Medicine):**

1. Place 1 tablet under your tongue.
2. Wait 5 minutes.
3. Can repeat 2 more times.
4. If signs do not ease or go away, call 9-1-1.

## Get regular health checks

- ☐ I will see my family doctor in one (1) week after going home. I will tell my nurse if I don't have a family doctor.
- ☐ I will talk to my doctor about my health and follow up care.
- ☐ I will ask if I should see a cardiologist.

## Be Active and Eat Well

- ☐ I know what to do to keep active. I know exercising and eating healthy is important to my long term health.
- ☐ I will ask my doctor if I should go to a 'Cardiac Check-in' or exercise program.
- ☐ I know it is okay to ask for help and support if I feel anxious or depressed for long periods of time.
- ☐ I have received some guidance about how to return to exercise/sexual activity.



## Quit Smoking

- ☐ If I smoke, I realize the best thing I can do for my health is to stop.
- ☐ If I want help to quit, I can visit [www.quit.now.ca](http://www.quit.now.ca) or call 1-877-455-2233.



## Take My Medications

- ☐ I know about my medications to improve blood flow and reduce my heart's need for oxygen.
- ☐ I will fill my prescriptions and ask my pharmacist to review how to take them.
- ☐ I will check with my pharmacist or doctor before stopping any medications.



**I am the expert in my own unique experience after a heart attack.  
I am the most important person in managing my health.**

---

## **Resources for After a Heart Attack**

---

### **Fraser Health Cardiac Services**

- Healthy Heart Program
  - Cardiac Check-In Program
  - Cardiac Rehabilitation Program
- Programs might need a doctor's referral.

### **Fraser Health Supported Programs**

- Get up and Go Classes  
(small fee, 65+ yrs.)  
Offered at local community centres  
604-587-7866
- Smoking Cessation Clinic  
Offered at Ridge Meadows Hospital  
604- 463-1820

### **Web and Community Resources**

- [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca) 8-1-1  
Information online or speak to a registered nurse, pharmacist, or dietitian anytime of the day or night.
- Nicotine Replacement Therapy 8-1-1  
Free nicotine patches, lozenges, inhaler, or gum available to any B.C. resident who wants to quit smoking.
- Chronic Disease Self-Management  
[www.selfmanagement.ca](http://www.selfmanagement.ca) 604-940-1273  
Supported by University of Victoria 1-866-902-3767
- Heart and Stroke Foundation  
[www.heartandstroke.bc.ca](http://www.heartandstroke.bc.ca) 778-372-8000
- Institute for Health + Lung Health  
[heartandlung.ca](http://heartandlung.ca)  
Supported by University of British Columbia