



PRESS RELEASE

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Holy Redeemer offers strategies to save your life from heart attack

(Meadowbrook, PA) – An estimated 80.7 million American adults (one in three) have one or more types of cardiovascular disease. In 2006, only 57 percent of women surveyed by the American Heart Association knew that heart disease is the leading cause of death among women.* Holy Redeemer Health System is offering the following strategies to increase awareness of heart disease and improve heart health.

Know the warning signs

Heart and cardiovascular diseases develop over time due to the deposition of cholesterol plaques. Sometimes these plaques rupture resulting in the formation of a blood clot which blocks the flow of blood to the heart muscle. When this happens, the heart tissue is at risk for irreparable harm which we know as a heart attack. Below are warning signs:

- Chest pains often described as heavy, tight, crushing
- Shortness of breath, often without chest pain of any kind
- Sudden unexplained fatigue, weakness, dizziness or sweating
- Pain in the upper back, shoulders, neck or jaw
- Any and all combinations of the above

Attack the heart attack

“Symptoms vary from person to person, but if you notice one or more of these signs, it’s important to call 911 immediately,” says Dr. Henry Unger, chairman of the department of emergency medicine at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center. “A quick response may increase your chance of a successful recovery. It’s important to remember, time is muscle, meaning the longer you wait, the greater damage to your heart.”

Once it is determined that a patient is having a heart attack the physicians and staff immediately activate a “cath alert” program designed to initiate life saving treatments and activate the state-of-the-art cath lab where cardiologists insert a balloon tipped catheter into the blocked coronary vessel and re-establish blood flow. The American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association have established a 90 minute goal for

providing this treatment. This means that within 90 minutes of arrival the patient must be seen and treated by the emergency physician, transported to the cardiac catheterization lab, prepped for angioplasty, and have blood flow re-established in the blocked coronary artery.

Says Dr. Unger: “We recognize that angioplasties can give patients the best chance at survival and quality of life, so we are dedicated to providing that service in an efficient, rapid, high quality manner. However, patients must help themselves by recognizing the symptoms early and getting to a hospital as soon as possible.”

Reduce your risk

There are many things you can do to greatly decrease your risk of developing heart disease. These include:

- Not smoking
- Reducing high blood cholesterol
- Lowering your blood pressure
- Exercise
- Weight control
- Controlling diabetes, if applicable

“Unfortunately there are some risks beyond your control,” says Dr. Unger. “These include family history of heart disease, a previous heart condition, gender and increasing age – 45 or older for men and 55 or older for women.”

Take the first step

Your family physician can help determine your risk for heart disease. Asking your doctor the following questions can be your first step to getting heart healthy and staying that way.

- What is my risk for heart disease?
- What is my blood pressure?
- What are my cholesterol numbers? These include total cholesterol, “bad” cholesterol (LDL), “good” cholesterol (HDL) and triglycerides.
- What are my “body mass index” and waist measurement?
- What is my blood sugar level, and does it mean I’m at risk for diabetes?
- What other screening tests for heart disease do I need? How often should I return for checkups for my heart health?
- What can you do to help me quit smoking?
- How much physical activity do I need to help protect my heart?
- What is a heart-healthy eating plan for me? Should I see a registered dietitian or qualified nutritionist to learn more about healthy eating?
- How can I tell if I’m having a heart attack?

For more information about heart health, please call 1-800-818-4747 or visit www.heartatholyredeemer.com.

**American Heart Association statistics*