



## **HEART ATTACK 1-2-3's: WHAT TO DO DURING A HEART ATTACK**

**LOS ANGELES (Feb. 2, 2004)** – It's no secret that heart disease is the number one killer of both men and women in America. Yet, when a heart attack strikes, most people don't know what to do, resulting in the loss of vitally important time – time during which the heart becomes increasingly damaged.

According to Prediman K. Shah, MD., Director of the Division of Cardiology and the Atherosclerosis Research Center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, it's important to not only recognize the signs of a heart attack, but also to know what to do and to act quickly. "Getting immediate, appropriate care is the single most important thing you can do to help lessen the damage of a heart attack," he says. "If you think you or someone you know might be experiencing a heart attack, take immediate action."

1. **TIME IS MUSCLE** - Call 9-1-1 immediately. "Do not waste time trying to reach your own doctor," says Dr. Shah. "Don't try to drive yourself or someone else to the hospital in this situation, and don't call a cab. Instead, the safest bet is to call 9-1-1 and summon an ambulance. Why? Because within the first few hours after a heart attack, there is a high risk of sudden fatal arrhythmia (irregular heartbeats), and only ambulances with fire department personnel or paramedics are equipped to revive you should your heart suddenly stop beating. Remember, every minute of delay means more heart muscle is damaged. When it comes to heart attack, **TIME is MUSCLE**."
2. **ASPIRIN** - Chew one aspirin. "Most heart attacks are caused by blood clots in the arteries, and aspirin reduces the growth of these clots," says Dr. Shah.
3. **CPR** - If the patient is not breathing, start cardi-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). If you haven't taken a class in CPR, sign up today. It's easy to learn, and it saves lives.
4. **NO FLOW, NO HOPE** - Once you've arrived at the hospital, the diagnosis should be rapidly established, and every attempt made to get the blocked artery opened as quickly as possible. In most cases, the best acute treatment is to restore blood flow through the blocked artery using angioplasty or clot-dissolving medications.

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