

# Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention

Division of Chronic Disease  
Prevention and Control  
[www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov)



**In order to assure that the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Project always provides a consistent message, the following language must be used whenever messages are provided, either as part of an in-person presentation, for written educational messages, or as a part of a media campaign. If you plan to shorten the message in order to fit it into a small area, please submit the materials to the central office for review before finalizing them.**

The warning signs of stroke are:

- **Sudden** numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- **Sudden** confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- **Sudden** trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- **Sudden** trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- **Sudden**, severe headache with no known cause. (The worst headache I've had in my whole life.)

Not all of these signs may be present every time. Sometimes, the signs may start and then go away. If someone is having even one of these signs even for just a few minutes, they need to get to the hospital **right away**. **It is important to note the time the first signs appear and be able to give that information to the medical team.**

The warning signs of a heart attack are:

- **Chest discomfort:** Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of the chest. It lasts more than a few minutes or it may go away and come back.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body:** Pain or discomfort that spreads to the arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath:** With or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs:** These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or lightheadedness.

**Not all of these signs may be present every time.**