

# **\* \* \* Fact Sheet \* \* \***

## **Health Tips - Warning Signs of Heart Attack**

Major storms such as hurricanes may lead to high stress levels for many residents, especially those performing heavy physical activity. Therefore, it is important to know the heart attack warning signs.

While some heart attacks are sudden and intense, many heart attacks start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. If you or someone you know begins to have chest discomfort, especially with one or more of the other signs of a heart attack, call 9-1-1 right away.

### **WARNING SIGNS OF A HEART ATTACK INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** May occur before, with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs:** Breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.

### **WHAT TO DO?**

- If you or someone you're with shows one or more of these signs, don't ignore them.
- Call 9-1-1 to get medical help right away. Don't wait, call immediately.
- Calling 9-1-1 is almost always the fastest way to get lifesaving treatment. Emergency medical services staff can begin treatment when they arrive – up to an hour sooner than if someone gets to the hospital by car. Emergency medical professionals can also initiate life saving measures for someone whose heart has stopped.

### **PLAN AHEAD**

- Learn the heart attack warning signs.
- Talk with your health care provider about your heart attack risk and what to do to reduce it.
- Talk with family, friends and coworkers about warning signs and calling 9-1-1.

For further information, please contact your local health department, or visit the DHMH web site at <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us>.