

# Don't delay at first sign of heart attack

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Craig Goergen, a Purdue University assistant professor of biomedical engineering, says a new American Heart Association campaign that urges people to call 911 at the first sign of a heart attack can be a life-saver.

Goergen, who studies cardiovascular disease, imaging and mechanics, says fast medical intervention after a [heart attack](#) can mean the difference between life and death.

"Health care providers can give aspirin to prevent further blood clotting and nitroglycerin to reduce the heart's workload and improve blood flow," he said. "They also can administer thrombolytic therapies that can actually dissolve blood clots. Electrical cardiac defibrillation also can be used to stop abnormal heart rhythms that prevent the heart from beating efficiently after a heart attack."

February is American Heart Month, and the American Heart Association has launched its "Don't Die of Doubt" campaign that urges people not to ignore the signs of a heart attack.

Goergen describes these possible signs as a feeling of pressure in the chest; pain in the back, neck, arms or chest; shortness of breath; nausea; or the development of a cold sweat.

He says causes of a heart attack can be increasing age, unhealthy diet, sedentary lifestyle and genetics.

**More information:** A calculator to estimate risk of a heart attack can be found at [my.americanheart.org/profession...7698\\_SubHomePage.jsp](http://my.americanheart.org/profession...7698_SubHomePage.jsp)

Provided by Purdue University

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