



Chapter 6. Part 2. Cardiovascular Emergencies

Chapter 6: Handling Medical Emergencies

Part 2: Cardiovascular Emergencies

(How to recognize and respond to heart attacks, strokes, shock, and fainting)

1 Recognizing and Managing a Heart Attack (Myocardial Infarction)

What is a Heart Attack?

A **heart attack** happens when blood flow to part of the heart muscle is blocked, usually by a clot in a coronary artery. This deprives the heart of oxygen and causes damage or death of heart tissue.

Common Symptoms:

- **Chest pain or pressure** (tight, squeezing, heavy feeling)
- Pain may radiate to **left arm, jaw, neck, or back**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Cold sweat**, nausea, lightheadedness
- **Denial or anxiety**

Not all heart attacks cause chest pain. Some patients—especially women, elderly, and diabetics—may only feel fatigue, indigestion, or dizziness.

First Aid for Heart Attack:

1. **Call 112 (EMS)** immediately.
2. **Keep the person calm and seated**—do not allow them to walk or lie flat.
3. **Loosen tight clothing** and reassure them.
4. **Give aspirin (150-300 mg)** if the person is not allergic and is conscious (it thins the blood).
5. **Monitor pulse and breathing.**
 - Be ready to start CPR if the person becomes unresponsive.

2 Recognizing and Managing a Stroke (Brain Attack)

What is a Stroke?

A **stroke** occurs when blood supply to a part of the brain is interrupted (ischemic stroke) or a blood vessel ruptures (hemorrhagic stroke). Brain cells begin to die within minutes.

Use the FAST Test for Quick Recognition:

F – Face Ask the person to smile. Does one side droop?



- A** - Arms Ask them to raise both arms. Is one arm weak or drifting?
S - Speech Ask them to speak. Is speech slurred or strange?
T - Time If **any** signs are positive → **call 112 immediately!**

Other Possible Stroke Signs:

- Sudden **confusion** or trouble understanding speech
- Sudden **vision problems**
- Sudden **severe headache**
- Sudden loss of balance or coordination

First Aid for Stroke:

1. **Call 112 immediately**—time is brain!
2. **Keep the person still** and seated or lying slightly on their side.
3. **Do NOT give food, drink, or medication.**
4. **Monitor breathing** and be prepared to give CPR.
5. Note the **time of symptom onset**—critical for hospital treatment like thrombolysis.

3 First Aid for Shock

What is Shock?

Shock is a life-threatening condition where the body's organs don't get enough blood flow. It can result from trauma, heart failure, allergic reaction, or blood loss.

Signs of Shock:

- Pale, cool, clammy skin
- Rapid breathing and pulse
- Weakness or confusion
- Bluish lips or fingernails
- Drop in blood pressure
- Unconsciousness (in severe cases)

First Aid for Shock:

1. **Call 112 immediately.**
2. **Lay the person down flat** on their back.
3. **Elevate their legs** 6-12 inches (unless there's injury to head, neck, back, or legs).
4. **Keep the person warm** with a blanket or clothing.
5. **Do not give anything to eat or drink.**
6. Monitor vital signs. If they stop breathing or lose pulse, **start CPR.**

4 First Aid for Fainting (Syncope)

What is Fainting?

Fainting is a temporary loss of consciousness due to a sudden drop in blood flow to the brain. It usually recovers within



seconds to minutes.

Causes:

- Standing too long
- Dehydration
- Sudden emotional shock or pain
- Low blood sugar
- Sudden change in position (postural hypotension)

Warning Signs Before Fainting:

- Dizziness or light-headedness
- Nausea
- Sweating
- Blurred vision or “tunnel vision”
- Pale skin

First Aid for Fainting:

1. **Lay the person flat on their back.**
2. **Elevate legs** slightly to increase blood flow to the brain.
3. **Loosen tight clothing**, especially around the neck.
4. Ensure fresh air—**open windows or move to a cooler area.**
5. If unconscious for **more than 1 minute**, or if injured from falling → **call 112.**

After regaining consciousness, let the person lie down for 10–15 minutes before standing slowly.

5 Self-Check Questions

1. What does FAST stand for in stroke recognition?
 2. When should aspirin be given during a heart attack?
 3. Why is it important to elevate the legs in shock?
 4. Name two early signs of fainting.
 5. What should you avoid giving to a person in shock or during stroke?
1. Face drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, Time to call emergency.
 2. If the person is conscious and not allergic to it.
 3. To improve blood flow to the brain and vital organs.
 4. Light-headedness, sweating, nausea, blurred vision.
 5. Food, drink, or oral medication.

□ Key Take-Home Points

- **Heart attack** = chest pain + shortness of breath → call 112, give aspirin.
- **Stroke** = sudden weakness or speech trouble → use **FAST**, get emergency help.
- **Shock** needs immediate help—lie down, elevate legs, don't give food/drink.
- **Fainting** is brief—ensure the person lies down and recovers slowly.



Let me know if you'd like **diagrams of heart attack zones, stroke types**, or a **one-page CPR + cardiovascular emergency aid poster!**

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