9 - Prevent Heart Attacks: Safety Training

EH&S – MGA

Goals: This safety session should teach you to:
   A. Understand heart attack risk factors and symptoms.
   B. Know ways to reduce heart attack risk.

OSHA Regulations: General Duty Clause Sec. 5 (b)

1. Understand What Causes Heart Attacks
   A. The heart receives oxygen-rich blood from the lungs and sends it throughout the body. A heart attack occurs when a clot blocks the arteries that carry the blood.
   B. Blockages damage the heart muscle within minutes. Within hours, damage may be so great it prevents the heart from functioning.

2. Know Your Own Heart Attack Risk Factors
   A. You can’t prevent risk factors such as a history of family heart disease, male sex, or age.
   B. You can prevent or control others:
      1. Being overweight makes your heart work too hard.
      2. High cholesterol levels and diets high in cholesterol and saturated fat clog and block the arteries.
      3. Smoking narrows blood vessels, increases heart rate, and doubles heart attack risk.
      4. Lack of exercise can increase body weight and cholesterol levels.
      5. Stress can trigger health problems and weaken the heart.
      6. High blood pressure makes the heart work harder and weakens it.
      7. Diabetes, if uncontrolled, increases cholesterol levels.

3. Improve Your Diet to Reduce Heart Attack Risk
   A. Eat fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grain breads, cereals, pasta, and rice.
   B. Avoid saturated fats like butter, “junk food,” fried food, creams, and gravies.
   C. Eat steamed, broiled, and baked foods and low or nonfat dairy products.
   D. Restrict salt intake to keep blood pressure down.
      1. Check packaged food labels for sodium content.
      2. Substitute pepper or other seasonings for sodium.
   E. Avoid alcohol to keep blood pressure down and if you’re diabetic.

4. Stop Smoking—It’s the Single Best Way to Prevent a Heart Attack
   A. Once you stop, your heart begins to recover from the damage smoking has done.
5. Start Exercising
   A. Consult your doctor about exercising, which can reduce heart attack risk by:
      1. Helping to keep weight down
      2. Reducing the heart rate and improving circulation
      3. Reducing stress

6. Reduce Stress
   A. Constant stress weakens the heart and your resistance to illness.
   B. Identify and gain perspective on things that cause you stress.
   C. Learn stress management techniques.

7. Act Immediately If You Have Heart Attack Symptoms
   A. Get to a hospital immediately if you experience:
      1. Chest pain that lasts longer than 10 minutes.
   B. It can range from slight discomfort to pressure or tightness to crushing pain.
      1. Pain that radiates to the left shoulder, arm, back, teeth and/or jaw even if you rest, change position, or take medicine.
   C. Promptly report to your doctor such potential heart problem symptoms as:
      1. Frequent angina—chest pain that goes away when you rest. It’s a sign your heart needs more oxygen.
      2. Shortness of breath
      3. Weakness
      4. Anxiety or restlessness
      5. Dizziness, fainting, and/or change in pulse rate
      6. Sweating
      7. Nausea and/or vomiting
      8. Pale or bluish skin

**Summation: Most Heart Attacks Can Be Prevented**

Take a realistic look at your risks, consult your doctor, and change your habits in order to save your heart.