

# **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.