

What is a Heart Attack (MI)?

A heart attack is also known as a “myocardial infarction” (MI). A heart attack occurs when there is a blockage of blood flow in one or more of the coronary blood vessels (arteries) that supply blood to the heart muscle.

What Can I Expect During my Hospital Stay?

- You may stay in the hospital for 2 - 5 days.
- You may be in the coronary care unit, cardiac interventional unit, or telemetry unit (heart monitoring unit).
- **It is important that you report any chest discomfort or heart attack symptoms to your nurse.** You will be asked to rate your pain on a scale from 0 to 10. A 0 means no pain, and a 10 means the worst pain you can imagine.
- Your heart will be monitored for abnormal rhythms (arrhythmias).
- You will have at least 1 intravenous (IV) line to give you fluids and medications. An IV is a small, thin plastic catheter (tube) that is placed in the vein in your arm.
- You will receive oxygen to make it easier to breathe.
- You may be given medications to dissolve blood clots, relax the blood vessels, and help your heart pump more effectively.
- You may undergo different tests or procedures to see how well your heart is functioning such as EKG, echocardiogram, or cardiac catheterization. Also, you will have frequent blood tests to monitor your condition.
- Your doctor may recommend a Percutaneous Coronary Intervention (PCI) procedure to open up the blocked artery, i.e. angioplasty, stent placement, and atherectomy.
- Once your condition is stabilized, and you are pain free, you will be able to get out of bed to sit in a chair or go to the bathroom. Be sure to ask for help the first few times you get out of bed. **Note:** If you have PCI, you will be on bedrest for up to 24 hours.
- You may be placed on a low fat (cholesterol), low salt (sodium) diet unless otherwise directed by your doctor.

What Can I Expect During my Hospital Stay? *(continued)*

- Doctors and nurses are available to listen to your concerns and feelings, as well as case managers, social workers, and chaplains.
- You will receive information about cardiac risk factors and a heart-healthy lifestyle.
- **Please refer to the "Recovery Guide on Heart Attack"** which has detailed information on cardiac risk factors, medications, diagnostic treatments, and interventions.

More Ways to Learn

1. **Call the Institute for Health & Healing at (415) 600-4325.** Services include hospital chaplains, massage therapy, integrative body work-energy therapy, guided imagery, and the expressive arts.
2. **Watch the Patient Video Education Channel in your hospital room.**
3. **Ask about our Cardiac Rehabilitation Program** by calling (415) 600-3361. This is a comprehensive program for cardiac patients and their families.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is a heart attack (MI)?

Answer: A heart attack is also known as a "myocardial infarction" (MI). A heart attack occurs when there is a blockage of blood flow in one or more of the coronary blood vessels (arteries) that supply blood to the heart muscle.

Question: What tests or procedures will I have?

Answer: You may have an EKG, echocardiogram, cardiac catheterization, or PCI.

Produced by the Center for Patient and Community Education in association with Department of Quality and Clinical Resource Management at California Pacific Medical Center. Date: 1/03

© 2003-2008 California Pacific Medical Center

Funded by: A generous donation from the Mr. and Mrs. Arthur A. Ciocca Foundation.

Note: This information is not meant to replace any information or personal medical advice which you get directly from your doctor(s). If you have any questions about this information, such as the risks or benefits of the treatment listed, please ask your doctor(s).