

MEDIA RELEASE

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Learn to start a heart during National Heart Week

This year National Heart Week will be held from 4th – 10th of May and St John (NSW) is encouraging people to undertake first aid training in order to understand the risks associated with heart related illness and how to assist in the event of a heart attack.

Here, St John (NSW) explains basic first aid for dealing with a heart attack:

Cardiac arrest may occur as the first symptom of heart attack for some people; however most experience some warning signs.

The warning signs of heart attack vary, with the symptoms usually lasting for at least 10 minutes. The casualty may get more than one of these symptoms:

- Discomfort or pain in the centre of the chest. It may come on suddenly, or start slowly over minutes. It may be described as tightness, heaviness, fullness, or squeezing. The pain may be severe, moderate or mild.
- Pain may spread to the neck and throat, jaw, shoulders, the back and either or both arms.

The casualty may have other signs and symptoms including:

- Shortness of breath
- Sweating
- Nausea/vomiting
- Dizziness

The presence of the warning signs of heart attack is a life threatening emergency. In the event of a heart attack, St John advises the following:

1. Advise casualty to rest:
 - Advise casualty to stop activity, and sit or lie down and rest
2. Casualty to take medication:
 - If casualty has prescribed medication such as a tablet or oral spray for angina, get it and assist casualty in taking it as they have been directed
3. Seek urgent medical attention:
 - If unconscious follow DRABCD
 - If symptoms last 10 minutes, get worse quickly or are severe call 000 for an ambulance immediately
 - Do not drive casualty to hospital, in case of cardiac arrest

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4. Give aspirin:
 - Give 300mg (one tablet) of aspirin in water
 - Do not give aspirin to those allergic to it, to asthmatics or those on anti-coagulant medication (e.g. warfarin), or their doctor has warned against then taking aspirin
5. Monitor vital signs:
 - Monitor consciousness, breathing and movement
 - Be prepared to give CPR

For more information on St John first aid training and kits, visit www.stjohnnsw.com.au or call 1300 360 455.

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