

Health Watch

San Francisco

Plan Ahead!

In Case of a Heart Attack, *Place Is of the Essence* St. Mary's Medical Center



"Heart disease will strike one in three women," says St. Mary's cardiologist Leslie Campbell, M.D. "Many women worry about breast cancer without realizing that they are 10 times more likely to experience heart disease and heart attacks."

Women, Mind Your Hearts

Choices you make now can affect your future, so stop smoking, exercise regularly, aim for a healthy weight, control your blood pressure, prevent or control diabetes and know your cholesterol level. Ask your doctor to discuss

For the best possible chance of survival, the American Heart Association and the American College of Cardiology recommend that heart attack patients receive angioplasty within 90 minutes of their arrival at the hospital. Thanks to its rigorous, continuous quality improvement program, St. Mary's achieves this standard of excellence.

your risk factors for heart disease each year and if you have any symptoms, ask for a referral to a cardiologist.

Select the Right Medical Center

In case of a heart attack, many experts believe that getting to the right hospital may be even more important than getting to a hospital fast. That's why you need to know about the life-saving cardiovascular programs at St. Mary's Medical Center.

Patients who arrive at the medical center's emergency department with heart attack symptoms are quickly triaged to its round-the-clock chest pain evaluation unit — the only one in San Francisco — for a complete workup.

If the diagnosis is positive, the patient is taken immediately to the cardiac catheterization lab, where the blocked artery is re-opened. This procedure is known as primary angioplasty, and it's the standard of care for most heart attack patients.

St. Mary's Medical Center's two all digital cath labs provide the most precise imaging possible to guide specialists as they perform diagnostic and interventional procedures for coronary artery and peripheral vascular disease.

Ask for What You Need

"Because a woman's heart attack symptoms may differ from a man's, they may not be easily recognizable," says Dr. Campbell. That's yet another reason to seek care at a hospital with a chest pain evaluation unit and a cardiac cath lab.

Get to centrally located St. Mary's as quickly as possible if you experience classic heart attack symptoms that last more than 15 minutes including discomfort in the chest, arm, back, neck, jaw or stomach. Women may experience atypical symptoms such as indigestion or gas-like pain, light-headedness, or unexplained weakness or fatigue.

"Don't be afraid to ask for what you need," Dr. Campbell urges. "Ask to be taken to the right hospital and ask for tests to determine whether you are having a heart attack. If there were ever a time to assert yourself, this is it."

St. Mary's Medical Center



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St. Mary's Medical Center's comprehensive cardiovascular program features all the latest diagnostic equipment and treatment capabilities. Experienced cardiologists, interventionalists, nurses and technicians are available 24 hours a day.