A heart attack occurs when blood flow to the heart is blocked.

Cardiac arrest is an “ELECTRICAL” problem.

A blocked artery prevents oxygen-rich blood from reaching a section of the heart. If the blocked artery is not reopened quickly, the part of the heart normally nourished by that artery begins to die.

WHAT HAPPENS

Symptoms of a heart attack may be immediate and may include intense discomfort in the chest or other areas of the upper body, shortness of breath, cold sweats, and/or nausea/vomiting. More often, though, symptoms start slowly and persist for hours, days or weeks before a heart attack. Unlike with cardiac arrest, the heart usually does not stop beating during a heart attack. The longer the person goes without treatment, the greater the damage.

WHAT IS A HEART ATTACK?

Most heart attacks do not lead to cardiac arrest. But when cardiac arrest occurs, heart attack is a common cause. Other conditions may also disrupt the heart’s rhythm and lead to cardiac arrest.

WHAT IS THE LINK?

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WHAT HAPPENS

Seconds later, a person becomes unresponsive, is not breathing or is only gasping. Death occurs within minutes if the victim does not receive treatment.

WHAT TO DO

Cardiac arrest can be reversible in some victims if it's treated within a few minutes. First, call 9-1-1 and start CPR right away. Then, if an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) is available, use it as soon as possible. If two people are available to help, one should begin CPR immediately while the other calls 9-1-1 and finds an AED.

CARDIAC ARREST is a LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH.

Nearly 360,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur annually in the United States.

Fast action can save lives.

Learn more about CPR or to find a course, go to heart.org/cpr