Heart Attack and Stroke FACT SHEET

New data from SCAI confirms a dangerous trend: 40 percent of Americans feel going to the hospital is riskier than going to the beach or a hair salon - even when faced with a heart attack.

Arriving to the hospital early (within 6 hours) of ischemic stroke is key to a favorable outcome.

During a heart attack, just 90 minutes is the window of time to receive treatment for the best possible outcome.

When it comes to a heart attack or stroke, time is the greatest indicator of survival. By knowing the warning signs, you can be more prepared to get the care you need in case of a medical emergency.

Heart disease is the number one killer of Americans each year, responsible for one in four deaths. However, in the current COVID-19 environment, the number of heart attack patients going to the hospital for urgent treatment has decreased by 50 percent.¹

Cardiovascular disease doesn’t stop for COVID-19. When faced with a medical emergency, remember: seconds count when it comes to saving your life.

Signs of a Heart Attack
It’s easy to delay action for a heart attack, because you might not know you are having one. It’s important to know the symptoms to prevent additional damage to the heart muscle.

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body: one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach
- Shortness of breath with or without chest discomfort
- Pounding heart or changes in heart rhythm
- Heartburn, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

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Signs of a Stroke
The symptoms of stroke will seem unusual and come on suddenly. Call 911 if you or someone you’re with notices these unexplained, sudden warning signs:

- A feeling of numbness or weakness in your face, arm, or leg (you might notice it on one side more than the other)
- Vision problems in one or both eyes
- Dizziness or loss of balance; difficulty walking
- Confusion
- Problems speaking or understanding what other people are saying
- Severe headaches without warning or explanation

¹ European Society of Cardiology, ² American Heart Association

For more information, visit secondscount.org
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Women may have a heart attack without experiencing chest pain. Common heart attack symptoms in women include:

- Sudden onset of weakness or body aches
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea, vomiting, indigestion
- Overall feeling of illness
- Mild discomfort or unusual feeling in the back, chest, arm, neck or jaw
- Sleep disturbance

What to Ask Your Doctor

- What precautions are hospitals/doctor offices taking to prevent the spread of COVID-19?
- What are the best ways to prepare for my doctor appointment?
- How do I handle my annual EKG appointment?
- Is telemedicine an option for some appointments?
- What other ongoing monitoring options are available to me?

What Hospitals Are Doing

- Checking temperatures
- Requiring masks
- Limiting number of visitors
- Practicing social distancing in waiting rooms