

WARNING

Important Notice Regarding the article “How to Survive a Heart Attack When Alone.”

Hundreds of people around the world have been receiving an e-mail message entitled “How to Survive a Heart Attack When Alone.” This article recommends a procedure to survive a heart attack in which the victim is advised to repeatedly cough at regular intervals until help arrives.

The source of information for this article was attributed to ViaHealth Rochester General Hospital. This article is being propagated on the Internet as individuals send it to friends and acquaintances - and then those recipients of the memo send it to their friends and acquaintances, and so on.

We can find no record that an article even resembling this was produced by Rochester General Hospital within the last 20 years. Furthermore, the medical information listed in the article can not be verified by current medical literature and is in no way condoned by this hospital’s medical staff. Also, both The Mended Hearts, Inc., a support organization for heart patients, and the American Heart Association have said that this information should not be forwarded or used by anyone.

Please help us combat the proliferation of this misinformation. We ask that you please send this e-mail to anyone who sent you the article, and please ask them to do the same.

Sincerely,

Rich Sensenbach

Web Development Coordinator

Believed to be the original source of the message, reprinted from the Mended Hearts, Inc. publication, *Heart Response*

As many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack, this article seemed in order. Without help, the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness.

However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough, and the cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. A breath and a cough must be repeated about every two seconds without letup until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again.

Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm.

In this way, heart attack victims may buy time to get to a phone, and between breaths call for help.

Although the text above was originally published in a Mended Hearts newsletter, the organization has since retracted it. Thier retraction says, in part:

“How to Survive a Heart Attack When Alone” was initially published in a local chapter newsletter, without first verifying a medical source. The American Heart Association does not endorse the coughing procedure, and does not teach this as part of the core curriculum in any course. This procedure has been used in a medical setting (not related to heart attacks) with physicians available to diagnose the specific problem, and to instruct the patient how to cough. Therefore, it is not a recommended procedure for the general public. We encourage the public to call the emergency services in the event of an emergency.

If you want to know more about this dangerous situation you might want to check out the following website address:
<http://www.simplycamping.com/heartattack.htm>

If you are at all concerned about your own situation please seek professional medical advice