

If I was alone at home and having a heart attack, what should I do?

Stay calm – but do not ignore or deny your symptoms. Prompt medical care at the onset of a heart attack is vital to survival and the quality of recovery.

Call 999. It is advisable to keep written directions to your home near all your telephones, so during an emergency you can read them to the police. We all become forgetful during stressful situations.

If you have a prescribed heart medication, take it immediately.

If you are not allergic to aspirin and your doctor has previously recommended that you take an aspirin for symptoms of a heart attack, do so while you are waiting for help to arrive.

Make sure the front door is unlocked—you may collapse and be unable to open the door. The ambulance service can then enter and initiate your treatment immediately without delay.

Loosen any tight clothing.

Position yourself in the most comfortable half-sitting position, with your legs elevated and a pad underneath your knees. This relaxed position takes some of the strain off of your heart.

Call a neighbour, explain the situation, and ask them to come and visit you. It is comforting to have someone with you for emotional support.

Courtesy Heidi Elmaarouf RN, professional nurse and American Heart Association Lead Instructor. You can email questions to her via advisor@abudhabiweek.com