

Appeals to 'stay at home' during COVID-19 do not apply to heart attacks

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People experiencing heart attacks should immediately phone the emergency services—even during the COVID-19 pandemic. The urgent call from the European Society of Cardiology (ESC) comes as hospitals in Europe and beyond report drastic reductions in heart attack admissions.

"Instructions to 'stay at home' and 'don't come to hospital' do not apply to patients with [heart attack](#) symptoms," said ESC President Professor Barbara Casadei.

"There are specific, lifesaving and evidence-based treatments for heart attacks but they need to be administered quickly to be most effective. Delaying puts your life at risk, increases the damage to your heart and the risk of developing heart failure," she added.

During the pandemic, many people with heart attack symptoms are delaying or avoiding going to hospital for fear of getting COVID-19. But Professor Casadei said: "Hospitals must have designated areas for heart attack patients to prevent spreading of coronavirus infection."

Heart attack symptoms include [chest pain](#), sweating, and shortness of breath. Other [warning signs](#) are pain in the throat, neck, back, stomach or shoulders that lasts for more than 15 minutes.

People with these symptoms need to call an ambulance straightaway, even if they are self-isolating because they, or someone they live with, may have COVID-19.

"Every minute counts when you have a heart attack." said Professor Casadei. "If you have symptoms of COVID-19 such as a high temperature or new persistent cough, tell the [emergency services](#) in advance. But get to a hospital quickly.

"Your life matters. If you are having a heart attack, we know how to save you and can do so very rapidly and effectively" she said.

Provided by European Society of Cardiology

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