

# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Know Your Symptoms: Heart Attacks Don't Always Start With Chest Pain

(NAPSA)—Forty-one-year-old Michelle Melvin was celebrating Mother's Day with her family when pain shot through her jaw and up into her temples. Then her arms went numb.

At first, Michelle ignored the sensation and proceeded to fill her children's plates with food. It wasn't until the pain and numbness returned multiple times that she told her husband that something was wrong. Her family chimed in with the usual remedies: Maybe you're hungry? Maybe you should lie down? Drink some water?

Michelle called Kaiser Permanente's 24-hour advice hotline for guidance. After explaining the odd sensation in her jaw and arms, the nurse on duty advised her to go to the hospital immediately: Michelle was describing symptoms of a heart attack.

Knowing the symptoms of a heart attack saves lives, and according to Kaiser Permanente cardiologist Julie Sutherland, M.D., women often experience different symptoms than men do. "They might experience shortness of breath; they might experience decrease in their exercise tolerance; they might experience neck or jaw pain," explained Dr. Sutherland. "It might not be the



**Michelle Melvin called Kaiser Permanente's 24-hour advice hotline for guidance when she experienced symptoms of a heart attack.**

sort of crushing chest pain where people grab their chest like you see on TV."

Michelle's husband rushed her to their local Kaiser Permanente hospital, where doctors monitored Michelle closely. When Michelle's tests came back, they proved the nurse right—Michelle had experienced a heart attack.

It is easy for many women who are busy with family and work responsibilities to ignore the first signs of a heart attack. Because Michelle followed her intuition and sought treatment right away, she fared well. Now fully recovered, she keeps her heart healthy by staying active and eating a

heart-healthy diet that is low in cholesterol, saturated fat and salt.

Seeking help at the first signs of a heart attack can prevent death and shorten recovery time. For questions or advice about a specific condition, always consult with your physician. To learn more about heart health, please visit [www.kp.org](http://www.kp.org). Also visit Kaiser Permanente's Care Stories blog to see a video about Michelle Melvin's story at [www.kp.org/carestories](http://www.kp.org/carestories).

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### Symptoms of Heart Attack for Women

- Jaw pain
- Shoulder pain
- Left arm pain
- Shortness of breath
- Sweating
- Chest pain
- Burning or numbness in back or shoulders

### Symptoms of Heart Attack for Men

- Pressure, tightness, squeezing, crushing sensation or intense burning feeling in the chest that lasts more than five minutes
  - Dizziness
  - Shortness of breath
  - Sweating
  - Irregular heartbeat
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