Heart Attack Action

- A heart attack is caused by a blood clot in an artery feeding the heart muscle.
- The major risks of a heart attack are cardiac arrest and permanent damage to the heart muscle.

IF YOU HAVE

Symptoms

Lasting longer than 15 minutes

dial 999

for an ambulance

Get treatment immediately!

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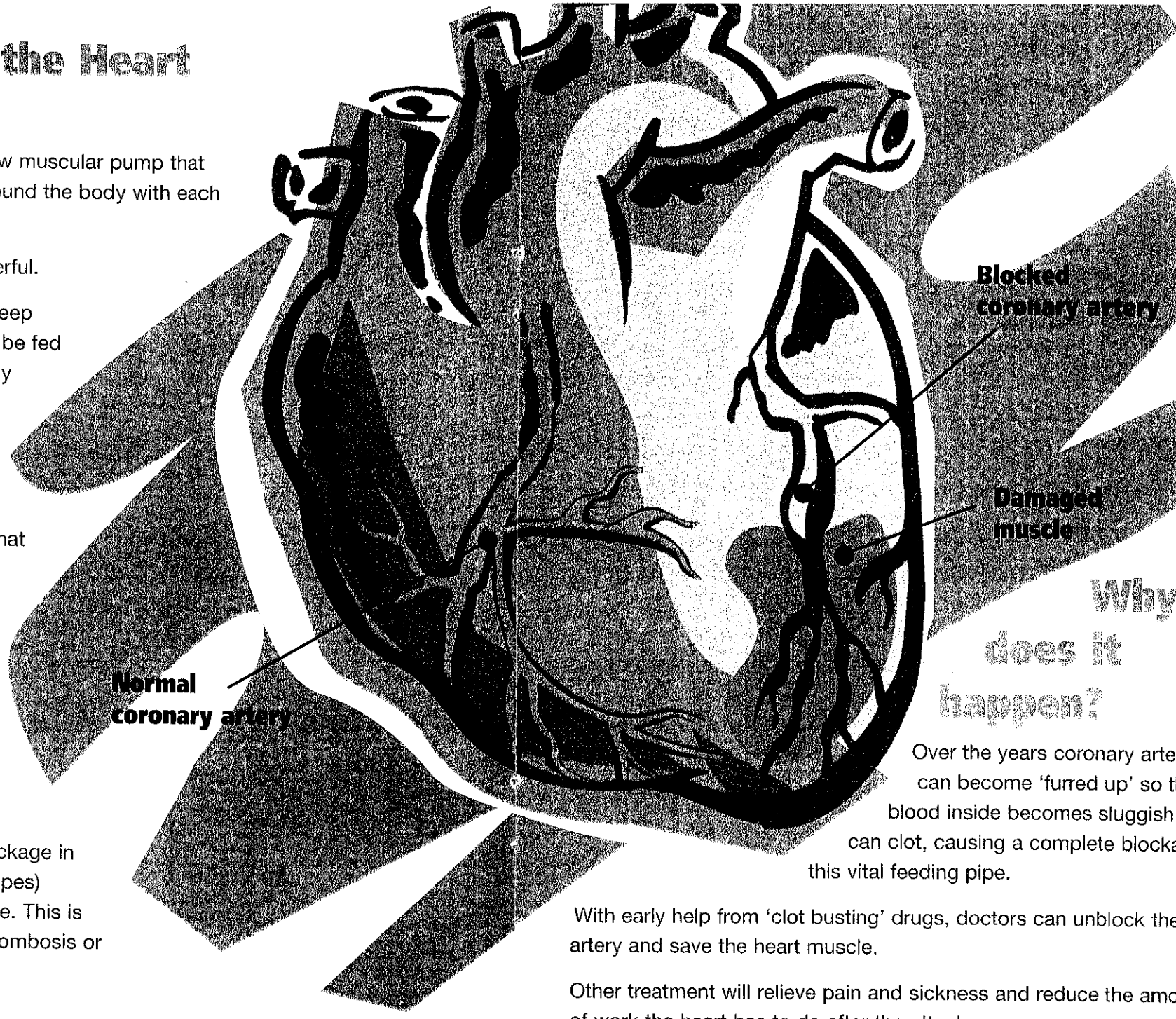
How does the Heart work?

- The heart is a hollow muscular pump that squeezes blood around the body with each heartbeat.
- It is extremely powerful.
- For the muscle to keep working it needs to be fed by a constant supply of oxygen-rich blood.
- This is done by narrow pipes (coronary arteries) that branch out over the heart muscle.



What is a Heart Attack?

This is caused by a blockage in the coronary arteries (pipes) feeding the heart muscle. This is also called coronary thrombosis or myocardial infarction.

Why does it happen?

Over the years coronary arteries can become 'furred up' so the blood inside becomes sluggish and can clot, causing a complete blockage in this vital feeding pipe.

With early help from 'clot busting' drugs, doctors can unblock the artery and save the heart muscle.

Other treatment will relieve pain and sickness and reduce the amount of work the heart has to do after the attack.

What are the Symptoms of a Heart Attack?

You may get one or more of these symptoms

- Crushing chest pain

  Heavy pressure in the chest area

  Discomfort in the chest area

  Dull ache in the chest area

  May be felt in your shoulders, neck, jaw, arms or back.

  Sweating

  Sickness

  Feeling faint

  Shortness of breath

- **This can be mistaken for indigestion**

- Symptoms last for more than 15 minutes, may get less and return

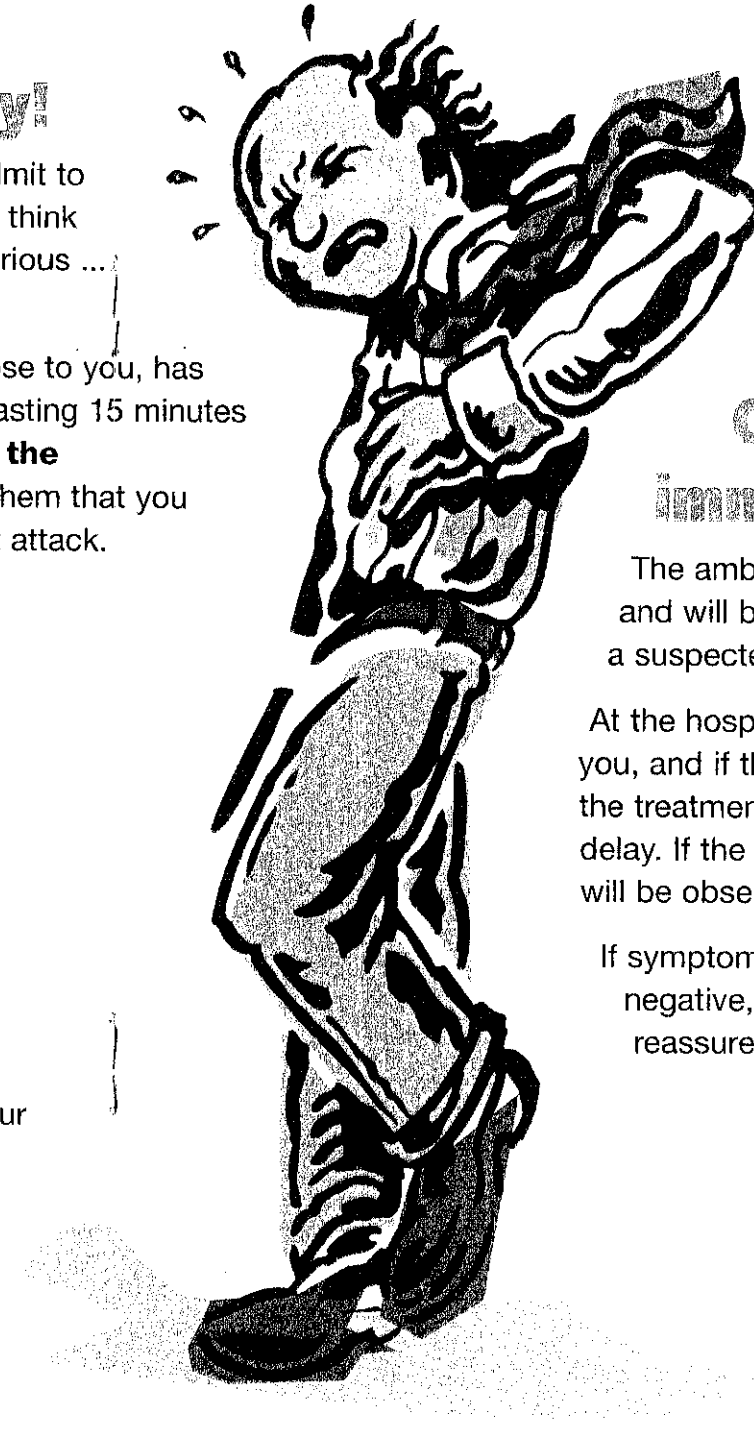
Get Help Immediately!

Many people won't admit to feeling unwell or don't think their symptoms are serious ... they are!

If you, or someone close to you, has symptoms like these lasting 15 minutes or more, **dial 999 for the ambulance**, and tell them that you think it may be a heart attack.

If you are unsure of your symptoms or need further advice call NHS Direct.

NHS Direct CALL 24 HOURS ON 0845 4647



Get treatment immediately!

The ambulance will arrive quickly and will be fully equipped to deal with a suspected heart attack.

At the hospital the doctor can examine you, and if the diagnosis is confirmed, the treatment will be started without delay. If the diagnosis is uncertain you will be observed carefully...

If symptoms subside and tests are negative, many people can be reassured and sent home.

What is Cardiac Arrest?

- Cardiac arrest is when the heart stops pumping. This can commonly occur in the early stages of a heart attack because the damaged heart muscle stops working properly.
- It is not possible to tell which heart attacks will progress to cardiac arrest and which will not.

What are the Signs of Cardiac Arrest?

The person collapses unconscious with no signs of breathing or a pulse.

Get help immediately and dial 999.

The only effective treatment in most cases is to use a high energy shock from a defibrillator. If a defibrillator is not available immediately, circulation to the brain can be maintained temporarily by chest compression and mouth to mouth resuscitation, known as cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

If you do not know how to do CPR, learning how might save someone's life.

For your nearest contact and further details about this training, contact:

Heart Start UK
www.bhf.org.uk
01793 346633

British Red Cross
www.redcross.org.uk
0117 986 9802

St. John's Ambulance
www.sja.org.uk
01380 728362

Royal Life Saving Society UK
www.lifesavers.org.uk
01789 773994

Cardiac Rehabilitation Department
Wiltshire Cardiac Centre
01793 426975

Southern Ambulance College
01249 454217