

## Many With Heart Disease Don't Know Signs of Heart Attack

More than half don't see themselves at any increased risk, researchers find

TUESDAY, May 27 (HealthDay News) -- Almost half the patients with a history of heart disease are unfamiliar with the symptoms of a heart attack and don't see themselves being at increased risk for one, a new study finds.

The research flies in the face of the known facts about heart attack: People with heart disease face five to seven times the risk of having a heart attack or dying, compared with the general population. Survival depends on how quickly treatment begins, with your chances improving if that treatment starts within an hour after the symptoms begin. Yet most heart attack patients are generally admitted to hospital more than two hours after symptoms start.

"The most striking finding of this study is that about half of the patients who have had either a heart attack or invasive cardiac procedure still don't know the early warning signs for disease recurrence, even though they are at very high risk," said Dr. Byron Lee, an associate professor of cardiology at the University of California San Francisco, who was not involved in the study.

Patients who do not know the **symptoms of a heart attack, which can include nausea and pain in the jaw, chest or left arm**, won't recognize the need for treatment. Moreover, patients with heart disease who don't see themselves as being at higher risk for heart attack, will look to other reasons for these symptoms.

"It is hard to know who is at fault, doctors or patients," Lee added. "However, the bottom line is that we have to do a better job because lives are being lost."

The report is published in the May 26 issue of the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.