

# Better Health 4 YOU

SMART Local 36 Benefit Fund

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WELLNESS-Be Proactive!

## 6 Symptoms You Shouldn't Ignore

### 1. Weakness in Your Arms and Legs

If you get weak or numb in your arm, leg, or face, it can be a sign of a stroke, especially if it's on one side of your body.

You could also be having a stroke if you can't keep your balance, feel dizzy, or have trouble walking.

Get help quickly if you suddenly can't see well, get a bad headache, feel confused, or have problems speaking or understanding.

"Caught early, it is often reversible," says internist Jacob Teitelbaum, MD.

Don't wait to see a doctor. Call 911. If you get a clot-buster drug within 4.5 hours of your first symptom, you can lower your risk of long-term disability from stroke.

### 2. Chest Pain

When it comes to chest pain, it's better to be safe than sorry.

"Any chest pain, especially accompanied by sweating, pressure, shortness of breath,

or nausea, should be evaluated by a medical professional right away," says Shilpi Agarwal, MD, with One Medical Group in Washington, DC.

Chest pain or pressure can be a sign of heart disease or a heart attack, particularly if you feel it after being active. It may also mean that you have a blood clot moving into your lung, Teitelbaum says.

If your chest feels tight or heavy, and it lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back again, get help. Don't try to tough it out.

### 3. Tenderness and Pain in the Back of Your Lower Leg

This can be a symptom of a blood clot in your leg. It's called deep vein thrombosis, or DVT. It can happen after you've been sitting for a long time, like on a long plane ride, or if you're sick and have been in bed a long time.

## Pineapple-Raspberry Parfaits

8-oz. nonfat peach yogurt (x 2)

½ pint fresh raspberries (1 ¼ cups)

1 ½ cups pineapple chunks, fresh or canned

Divide and alternate layering yogurt, raspberries and pineapple into 4 glasses.

Makes 4 parfaits

Calories 112, Fat 0g, Cholesterol 2mg, Carbohydrates 24g, Dietary fiber 5g, Protein 5g, Sodium 58mg



If it's a blood clot, you may feel the pain mostly when you stand or walk. You may also notice swelling.

It's normal to feel tenderness after exercise. But if you also see redness and feel heat where it's swollen or painful, call your doctor.

Teitelbaum says you can also check for what's called the Homans sign. "If you flex your toes upward and it hurts, that's also suggestive of a blood clot," he says. "But don't rely on that. If it's hot, red, and swollen on one side, go to the ER."

It's important to catch a blood clot before it can break off and block your blood flow, which can lead to complications.

#### 4. Blood in Your Urine

Several things can cause you to see blood when you pee.

If you have blood in your urine and you also feel a lot of pain in your side or in your back, you may have kidney stones. A kidney stone is a small crystal made of minerals and salts that forms in your kidney and moves through the tube that carries your urine.

Your doctor may take X-rays or do an ultrasound to see the stones. An X-ray uses radiation in low doses to make images of structures inside your body. An ultrasound makes images with sound waves.

Many kidney stones eventually pass through your body when you pee. Sometimes your doctor may need to remove the kidney stone.

If you see blood in your urine and you also have an increase in feeling that you urgently need to pee, make frequent trips to the bathroom, or feel burning when you urinate, you may have a severe bladder or kidney infection, Teitelbaum says. Don't wait to see your doctor, especially if you have a fever.

If you see blood but don't feel any pain, it may be a sign of kidney or bladder cancer, so visit your doctor.

#### 5. Wheezing

Breathing problems should be treated right away. If you're wheezing, or hear a whistling sound when you breathe, see your doctor.

"Without urgent evaluation, breathing can quickly become labored, and it can be catastrophic if not evaluated and treated quickly," Agarwal says.

It may be from asthma, a lung disease, a severe allergy, or exposure to chemicals. Your doctor can figure out what's causing it and how to treat it. If you have asthma, an allergist will create a plan to manage it and reduce flare-ups.

Wheezing can also be caused by pneumonia or bronchitis. Are you coughing up yellow or green mucus? Do you also have a fever or shortness of breath? If so, you may have bronchitis that's turning into pneumonia. "Time to see your doctor," Teitelbaum says.

#### 6. Suicidal Thoughts

If you feel hopeless or trapped, or think you have no reason to

live, get help. Talking to a professional can help you make it through a crisis.

Go to a hospital emergency room or a walk-in clinic at a psychiatric hospital. A doctor or mental health professional will talk to you, keep you safe, and help you get through this tough time.

You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255). It's free and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's confidential, so you can feel safe about sharing your thoughts.

