

Heart Attacks

During the 2016 hunting season we noticed an increased incidence of heart attacks. While these are not liability type occurrences, the subject is worthy of discussion.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, “The national hunting base is aging, with fewer young hunters filling the gaps that older hunters create when they no longer hunt. The participation rate among older hunters also climbs. Thus, hunters are getting older, and with higher participation rates among the older age classes there may be more hunters in the woods with health issues associated with those older age groups. Today the average hunter is 42 years old (mostly male) and approximately half of all hunters are 45 and older.”

According to the American Heart Association, “the prevalence of coronary heart disease increases substantially with age. For example, the increase in heart disease is from less than 1% of the population at age 20-39, to 6% for the age group 40-59, to almost 20% for the age group 60-79.”

Many hunters increase their normal physical activity to get ready for hunting season; Preparation such as clearing stands, planting food plots, trimming trees, and lifting fertilizer and seed bags may be outside their normal activity level. Increased age, coupled with strenuous above normal physical activity, may contribute to the increased incidences of heart attacks that were reported in 2016.

According to the American Heart Association, “1 out of 7 deaths are caused by coronary heart diseases and many of these deaths can be prevented..**by acting fast.**“

ADVANCE PLANNING ACTION: Hunting clubs should have a plan of action for any medical emergency. This is particularly important when speed and action are critical (as in the case of a heart attack). Since many hunters are on rural property and may not be familiar with nearby hospitals, a site map with emergency response numbers and procedures can be crucial for helping someone survive a heart attack. At minimum, the club members should know how to contact local emergency response services, the hospital closest to the hunting site, and the best directions to your hunting land. EMS can begin life-saving treatment as soon as they arrive. Time is of the essence in a heart attack situation. The faster they can find you the sooner treatment can begin.

KNOW THE SIGNS AND ACT: According to the American Heart Association, “recognizable signs of a potential heart attack can include: **chest discomfort, discomfort in other areas of the upper body, shortness of breath, cold sweat, nausea, and/or lightheadedness.**“

DO NOT DELAY: If you have the signs of a heart attack, seek immediate assistance. Many people wait 2 hours before seeking help. Delaying the response for heart attack symptoms is often caused by embarrassment that it might be a false alarm, or denial that it may be a heart attack. **Acting fast can substantially reduce further damage to the heart.**

