

Don't delay care with heart attack symptoms

In June 2022, there was little time to waste for Michael Davidson of Alton, Illinois.

One Sunday, he complained of chest pain and feeling tired. Hours later from the Emergency Department at OSF HealthCare [Saint Anthony's Health Center](#) in Alton, he learned what needed to be done: surgery for a "massive heart attack," as his wife Kathleen recalls the medical team's diagnosis.

The bypass surgery ended up taking seven hours at a hospital across the river in St. Louis. Davidson's cardiologist, [Sampath Kumar, MD](#), was able to be with him [every step of the way](#), something the man and his wife are grateful for.

SOT

Sampath Kumar, cardiologist at OSF HealthCare in Alton, Illinois

"Heart attacks happen in an unpredictable fashion. Just because somebody has blockages [in their heart] doesn't mean they will have a heart attack." (:06)

Heart attack symptoms like chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness and nausea are easier to catch in patients with an active lifestyle.

SOT

Sampath Kumar, cardiologist at OSF HealthCare in Alton, Illinois

"Sedentary patients tend to have fewer symptoms. And as we get older, we tend to blame things on just getting older. But I think it's important to maybe look at it from a different perspective and try to understand if there are some other causes that might be reversible that we need to look at." (:17)

Dr. Kumar admits that some patients might struggle with an internal debate: is this just heartburn, and a trip to urgent care might do the trick? Or is this a heart attack, and I need to go to the Emergency Department? His advice: see your primary care provider *before* it even gets to that decision point. Explain your symptoms, and your provider will decide the best course of action.

Davidson, meanwhile, is at home and feeling better than he was that June day. He's going through physical therapy and other typical parts of the rehabilitation process from a major heart event.

"Get your screenings, watch your symptoms and take advantage of the health care resources near you," Kathleen Davidson says.