

A SCAD Heart Attack

What is SCAD?

Spontaneous coronary artery dissection (SCAD) is a little known and poorly understood type of a heart attack caused when a sudden tear occurs within the layers of one or more arteries to the heart. This tear blocks blood flow causing a heart attack and sometimes death. Unlike a “traditional” heart attack caused by blockage due to plaque buildup over a lifetime, SCAD is a completely distinct and different artery blockage. SCAD can recur.



How is SCAD Diagnosed?

Since SCAD is a type of heart attack, patients typically have medical tests that are consistent with a heart attack diagnosis, including an electrocardiogram (EKG) and blood tests. A diagnosis of SCAD is made by an angiogram (heart catheterization) or occasionally by a CT scan of the heart. For medical information go to <http://tinyurl.com/scadmedical>.

Who Has a SCAD?

- Most are **YOUNG, HEALTHY, ACTIVE WOMEN**. The average age is 42.
- SCAD is the **#1 cause of heart attacks among WOMEN UNDER the AGE of 50**.
- SCAD is the **#1 cause of heart attacks in NEW MOTHERS and PREGNANT WOMEN**.
- Often there is **NO FAMILY HISTORY** of heart disease
- Although less common, SCAD can affect **MEN** too.
- Many have abnormalities of other arteries, most commonly **fibromuscular dysplasia (FMD)**.



How is SCAD Treated?

There is still no known cause and no way to prevent SCAD. Research has identified several associated conditions and shown that patients with acute SCAD should be treated differently from other heart attack patients. Diagnosing and treating SCAD is more complex than traditional heart attacks. Conservative, non-invasive treatment is often best.

How Can I Help?

Research is needed to find the causes and best treatment options. Research is expensive. To make a donation or to find out more information about SCAD, visit www.scadresearch.org.