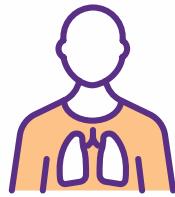


# IRISH HEART ATTACK AUDIT SUMMARY REPORT 2024

The Irish Heart Attack Audit (IHAA) measures the care of patients who suffered a major heart attack in 2024 and were treated in 1 of 10 specialist cardiac hospitals, known as percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI) centres. This type of heart attack is known as an ST elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI). A STEMI happens when the supply of blood to the heart is suddenly cut off, usually by a blood clot (thrombosis). In Europe, heart disease is the largest cause of death for both men and women.

## SYMPTOMS OF A HEART ATTACK

INCLUDE PAIN, DISCOMFORT, PRESSURE, TIGHTNESS OR HEAVINESS IN ANY OF THESE AREAS



NEW  
SHORTNESS  
OF BREATH

JAW



SWEATINESS

SHOULDERS

BACK



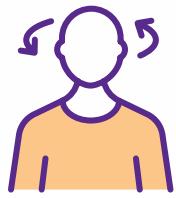
NECK

CHEST

ARMS



UNUSUAL  
STOMACH  
PAIN



CONFUSION

What should I do if I or someone else has symptoms of a heart attack?

**DON'T DELAY! IF YOU EXPERIENCE CHEST PAIN OR  
ANY OF THE SYMPTOMS MENTIONED ABOVE**

**CALL 999 OR 112 IMMEDIATELY**

Why? Patients who call 999 or 112 are more likely to receive a quick diagnosis and treatment, and are more likely to survive the heart attack.

# KEY FINDINGS 2024



## ARE YOU AT RISK OF A HEART ATTACK?

Smoking damages the heart and blood vessels. Thirty-six percent of patients with a STEMI in 2024 were smokers at the time of their heart attack, double the rate of smoking nationally (17%). Current smokers present with heart attack on average 11 years earlier than those who have never smoked.



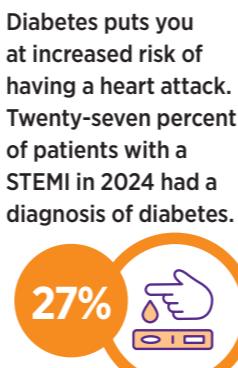
Too much cholesterol in your blood, known as hypercholesterolaemia, increases your risk. Forty-four percent of patients with a STEMI in 2024 had a previous history of hypercholesterolaemia.



High blood pressure, known as hypertension, increases your risk. Fifty-three percent of patients with a STEMI in 2024 had a previous history of hypertension.



Diabetes puts you at increased risk of having a heart attack. Twenty-seven percent of patients with a STEMI in 2024 had a diagnosis of diabetes.



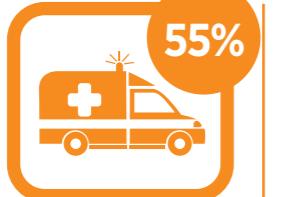
## GETTING TO THE RIGHT HOSPITAL AT THE RIGHT TIME

### IF YOU THINK SOMEONE IS HAVING A HEART ATTACK, CALL 112 OR 999 STRAIGHT AWAY.

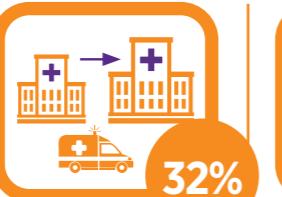
Paramedics can do an electrocardiogram (ECG) on the spot. If it shows a STEMI, they will take the person directly to a specialist hospital (PCI centre) for urgent treatment. If the person goes to a non-specialist hospital themselves, it can cause delays because they might then need to be transferred to a specialist hospital. That's why calling an ambulance is the fastest and safest option.



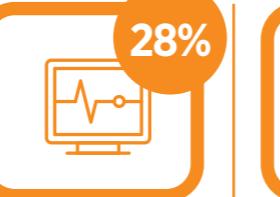
Only **45%** of patients with a STEMI who arrived at a PCI centre directly by ambulance in 2024 called for help within 60 minutes of the onset of symptoms.



**55%** of patients were brought directly by ambulance to a PCI centre in 2024.



**32%** of patients were transferred by ambulance from a non-specialist hospital to a PCI centre.



**28%** of patients who were transferred from a non-specialist hospital to a PCI centre had an ECG completed within 10 minutes.



**3%** of patients with a STEMI achieved the 30-minute 'door in door out' (DIDO) target in 2024.

DIDO time is the total time a heart attack patient spends at the first hospital, from arrival to departure to a PCI centre. The goal is to minimise this time in order to ensure that patients receive life-saving treatment as quickly as possible.

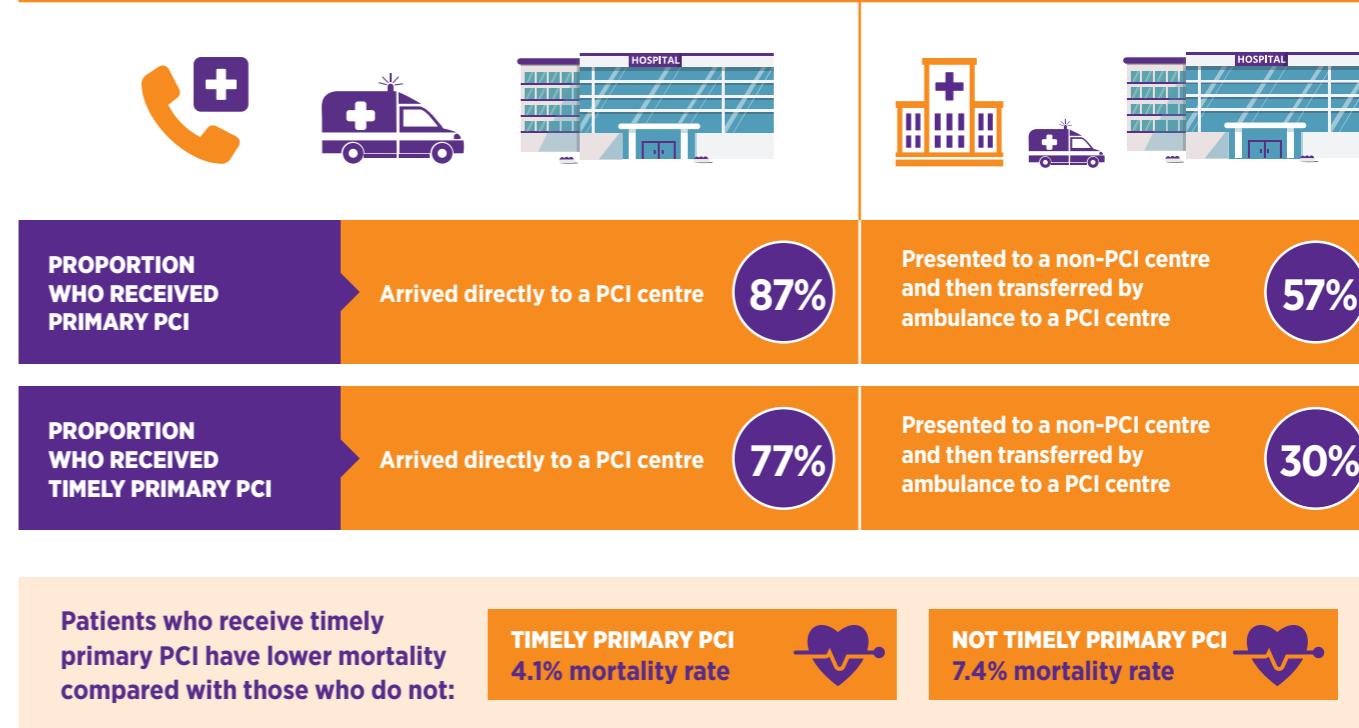
\*The median is the middle number in a list of numbers.

## HOW IS A HEART ATTACK TREATED

### PRIMARY PCI

Primary PCI is an emergency procedure performed in specialist hospitals in order to quickly open a blocked heart artery during a heart attack. To be most effective, this procedure needs to be done within 2 hours after a heart attack is diagnosed. Doing it within this time is called timely primary PCI.

**61%** received timely primary PCI.

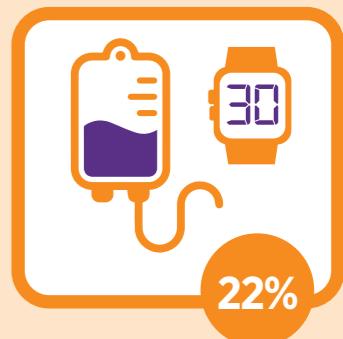


## THROMBOLYSIS

If a patient is unable to get to a PCI centre within 90 minutes, treatment with thrombolysis – a medication that dissolves blood clots – can be given.

In order to be effective, this medication needs to be given within 30 minutes of diagnosis of a STEMI; this is called timely thrombolysis.

In 2024, **7%** of patients with a STEMI received treatment with thrombolysis; **22%** of those received timely thrombolysis.



## PREVENTING ANOTHER HEART ATTACK



In 2024, **91%** of patients with a STEMI had an appropriate secondary prevention medication bundle prescribed, an increase from 86% in 2023 and achieving the target of 90%.



In 2024, **97%** of patients with a STEMI were referred to cardiac rehabilitation, which provides an exercise programme from 91% in 2023 and achieving the target of 90%.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## RECOMMENDATION 1

Improve the rate of primary PCI for all patients with a STEMI.



## RECOMMENDATION 2

Improve the timeliness of reperfusion for all patients with a STEMI.



## RECOMMENDATION 3

All PCI centres should implement targeted quality improvement initiatives to increase the proportion of patients with a STEMI who arrive at a PCI centre by ambulance who achieve the recommended 'door to balloon' time of 30 minutes or less.



## RECOMMENDATION 4

All PCI centres should implement targeted quality improvement initiatives to increase the proportion of patients with a STEMI who self-present to a PCI centre who achieve the recommended 'first medical contact to balloon' time of 60 minutes or less.



## A PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE: PAULA'S STORY

At 44 years of age, Paula suffered a heart attack while paddleboarding, initially mistaking her symptoms – faintness, sweating and arm pressure – for dehydration. She was quickly diagnosed with a heart attack and airlifted for life-saving surgery, spending 25 days in hospital and undergoing a long but supported recovery, including cardiac rehabilitation and lifestyle changes. Now healthy and back to work, she raises awareness about women's heart health, urging others to recognise subtle symptoms and seek immediate help.



LEARN MORE ABOUT PAULA'S JOURNEY AND INSIGHTS IN THE FULL REPORT. SCAN THE QR CODE TO HEAR HER STORY.

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