Do not ignore important signs and symptoms — from sudden weight loss to flashes of light — and know when to seek medical care.



# 7 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Chest pain, an upset stomach, sudden loss of vision or speech, and severe abdominal pain require immediate medical attention — but what about more signs that are more subtle in nature? We may not know what to do. Here's a list of seven signs and symptoms that demand attention for maintaining a healthy life.

## 1: Unexplained weight loss

If you are losing weight without trying might sound like a dream come true, but in reality it can signal an underlying health problem. If you've lost up to 10 percent of your weight during the past six months — for instance, 15 pounds (7 kilograms) if you weigh 150 pounds (68 kilograms) — it is time to go see your doctor immediately.

An unexplained drop in weight could be caused by various conditions — including overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism), diabetes, depression, liver disease, cancer or disorders that interfere with how your body absorbs nutrients (malabsorption disorders).

## 2: Persistent or high fever

A fever always isn't necessarily a cause for alarm. Fever seems to play a key role in fighting infection. Having said that, if your fever has continued for more than three days, get checked by your doctor. Persistent fever can signal a hidden infection, which could be anything from a urinary tract infection to tuberculosis. In some cases, cancerous (malignant) conditions — such as lymphomas — cause prolonged or persistent fevers, as can some medications.

If you have a high fever — 103 F or higher — consult your doctor as soon as possible.



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## 3: Shortness of breath

If you're unable to get your breath, or you're gasping for air or wheezing, seek emergency medical attention. Shortness of breath that feels more severe than what's caused by a stuffy nose or vigorous physical activity could signal an underlying health problem. Feeling breathless when lying down also is a symptom that needs to be evaluated promptly.

Causes for breathlessness may include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, a blood clot in the lung (pulmonary embolism), as well as other heart and lung problems. Difficulty breathing can also occur