

## Digging out of the snow? Be aware of the dangers of shoveling

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RICHMOND, Va. (WRIC) — It's an all out attack on the mountains of snow area residents are trying to dig themselves out of hibernation, but those with heart problems may want to pause before grabbing that shovel.

Doctors say the risk for heart attack in people with heart disease increases while shoveling snow.

"Shoveling snow with a heart condition, really you shouldn't do it," said Dr. Christopher Dietz. "If you have a history of high blood pressure or heart disease you really should let me someone else do the shoveling."

In the wake of the recent snowstorm, people all across the region are spending hours shoveling and removing snow. Many are unaware of the dangers that cold temperatures and extreme physical exertion poses on the heart.

There are some simple things people with heart conditions can do to stay safe while digging out from the snow.

According to the American Heart Association you should:

- Stretch or do warm-ups
- Take breaks
- Avoid heavy meals
- Use a small shovel instead of a large one
- Shovel slowly

Most importantly doctors say you should know the warning signs of cardiac arrest. They include:

- Chest pressure
- Chest tightness or squeezing sensation
- Jaw, shoulder, or neck pain
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Cold sweats

You should seek immediate medical attention if you experience any of these symptoms while shoveling snow.