

Cardiac Arrest and CPR Information

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is a leading cause of death among adults over the age of 40 in the United States and other countries. In the U.S. alone, approximately 424,000 people of all ages experience EMS-assessed out-of-hospital non-traumatic SCA each year (more than 1,000/day) and nine out of 10 victims die. In fact, the number of people who die each year from SCA is roughly equivalent to the number who die from Alzheimers disease, assault with firearms, breast cancer, cervical cancer, colorectal cancer, diabetes, HIV, house fires, motor vehicle accidents, prostate cancer and suicides combined. SCA is a life-threatening condition--but it can be treated successfully through early intervention with cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), defibrillation, advanced cardiac life support, and mild therapeutic hypothermia. When bystanders intervene by giving CPR and using automated external defibrillators (AEDs) before EMS arrives, four out of 10 victims survive.

WHY LEARN CPR?

Cardiac arrests are more common than you think, and they can happen to anyone at any time.

- Nearly 425,000 out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrests occur annually, and 88 percent of cardiac arrests occur at home.
- Many victims appear healthy with no known heart disease or other risk factors.
- Sudden cardiac arrest is not the same as a heart attack.
 - Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when electrical impulses in the heart become rapid or chaotic, which causes the heart to suddenly stop beating.
 - A heart attack occurs when the blood supply to part of the heart muscle is blocked. A heart attack may cause cardiac arrest.

WHO CAN YOU SAVE WITH CPR?

The life you save with CPR is mostly likely to be a loved one.

- Four out of five cardiac arrests happen at home.
- Statistically speaking, if called on to administer CPR in an emergency, the life you save is likely to be someone at home: a child, a spouse, a parent or a friend.

WHY TAKE ACTION?

- Effective bystander CPR provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest can double or triple a victim's chance of survival, but only 32 percent of cardiac arrest victims get CPR from a bystander.
- Sadly, less than eight percent of people who suffer cardiac arrest outside the hospital survive.
- The American Heart Association trains more than 12 million people in CPR annually, to equip Americans with the skills they need to perform bystander CPR.