



## news & notes

### AEDS AND CPR

People who are responsible for using an AED should also be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). After the AED delivers a shock, it often prompts the operator to continue CPR while the device continues to analyze the victim. But even if you're not trained in full CPR, you can still give first aid.

When a person isn't breathing, seconds count. Irreversible brain damage occurs within 3 minutes. You must act fast.

The American Red Cross advises that in such cases, bystanders untrained in CPR should call 911 and begin Compression-Only CPR immediately. The reason is that chest compressions will help get oxygen-rich blood circulating sooner than rescue breaths.

#### Here's how:

Give 30 chest compressions by placing both hands in the center of the victim's chest with one hand on top of the other and pressing down with the heel of your hand 1 ½ inches to 2 inches.

Press quickly at a rate of about 100 compressions per minute.

In most places, emergency responders will arrive within 3 to 4 minutes so continue compressions until then.

While these instructions are for untrained bystanders, consider taking full CPR training. Check [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) for local chapters who offer training.



How doctors jump-start their cars.

## The ABCs of AEDs

### *Know how to use these life-saving devices*

The first week in June is **National CPR and AED Awareness Week**. You may already know that CPR stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. But now you also need to know that AED stands for automated external defibrillator. And what does that mean exactly?

#### What are AEDs?

AEDs are computerized medical devices that can check a person's heart rhythm. They can recognize a rhythm that requires a shock and advise the rescuer when a shock is needed. The AED uses voice prompts, lights, and text messages to instruct the rescuer. More and more workplaces are purchasing AEDs to have another vital first aid tool to protect their employees. If your workplace has an AED, consider getting trained on how to use the AED so you'll be confident in how to operate the device successfully in an emergency situation.

#### Why Are They Becoming So Widespread?

The reason AEDs are becoming widespread in the community and workplace is that sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is responsible for between 300,000 to 400,000 deaths every year in the United States. However, prompt treatment with an AED to restart the heart can save many lives. Although costs vary, many models are available for between \$1,500 and \$2,000, which means most ambulances and first-response vehicles are now equipped with AEDs—as are more and more public places, such as sports arenas, shopping malls, doctors' offices, and many workplaces.

#### How Do They Save Lives?

SCA occurs when ventricular fibrillation (VF) takes place or when the heart stops beating altogether. Causes include:

- Heart attack
- Electrocutation
- Asphyxiation (loss of consciousness and death caused by inadequate oxygen in the work environment, such as in a confined space)

Most often cardiac arrest is due to VF, the uncoordinated beating of the heart, which can be restored to a normal rhythm if treated early with electric shock (defibrillation).

- The sooner defibrillation is started, the more likely the victim will survive.
- The optimum time for defibrillation is 3 to 5 minutes after the onset of the cardiac arrest.

Even with an AED at hand, emergency personnel should be called immediately—follow-up treatment at a medical facility will be required.