



New CPR procedures are easy to use and encourage immediate response

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Recently many health organizations, including the American Heart Association, the American Red Cross, and University of Arizona's College of Medicine, have issued new guidelines encouraging the use of "Hands-Only" cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) for first responses to many instances of sudden cardiac arrest. Recent studies have shown that being trained in Hands-Only CPR can make the lifesaving difference when someone suffers sudden cardiac arrest.

Hands-Only CPR is a potentially lifesaving technique involving no mouth to mouth contact; with Hands-Only CPR the responder does not give mouth-to-mouth breaths to the victim. This technique is best used in emergencies where someone has seen another person suddenly collapse. The Hands-Only technique increases the likelihood of surviving cardiac emergencies that occur outside medical settings.

Three simple steps

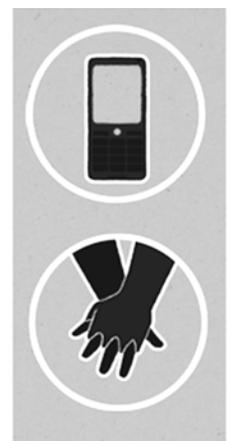
There are three simple steps to performing Hands-Only CPR:

1. *Determine if a collapsed person is conscious.* Tap them on the shoulder and yell into their ear and ask "Are you okay?" If they do not respond, rub your knuckles on the sternum of their chest to see if they respond. If they are unresponsive, you must start CPR. But first...
2. *Call 911*, or send someone else to do that.
3. *Now begin providing high-quality chest compressions by pushing hard and fast in the center of the chest with minimal interruptions.* Make sure the victim is laying flat on their back on a firm surface. Kneel next to the victim and place the heel of one hand on the victim's sternum (between their nipples) and place your other hand on top of the first hand. You do not need to interlace your fingers. Keeping your elbows locked and using the weight of your upper torso compress the sternum at least two inches and pull back up. Repeat this process at a rate of at least 100 compressions per minute. Do not stop until medical help arrives unless another responder can relieve you by performing chest compressions from the other side of the victim. It is critical to keep the blood pumping through the body and brain. If the person just collapsed, there is sufficient oxygen in the bloodstream to keep them alive for several minutes, but only if the responder keeps the blood pumping through the bloodstream via continuous compressions.

Who should receive Hands-Only CPR?

Hands-Only CPR is recommended for use on teens or adults (anyone over the age of 8) whom you witness suddenly collapse. There are many medical emergencies that cause a person to be unresponsive and to stop breathing normally. In those emergencies, CPR that includes mouth-to-mouth breathing may provide more benefit than Hands-Only CPR. The American Heart Association recommends conventional CPR (CPR with a combination of breaths and compressions) for:

- All infants (up to age 1)



- Children (up to age 8)
- Adult victims who are found already unconscious and not breathing normally
- Any victims of drowning, drug overdose, or collapse due to breathing problems.

The premise behind these new guidelines is that if you witness a person collapse in sudden-cardiac arrest, then it is assumed that the victim's lungs and blood contain enough oxygen to keep vital organs healthy for the first few minutes, as long as someone provides high quality chest compressions with minimal interruption in order to pump blood to the heart and brain. This is why maintaining chest compressions is critical. In situations where a responder does not witness a victim collapse or does not know how long they have been unconscious, traditional CPR that includes mouth-to-mouth breathing should be administered.

Is Hands-Only CPR better?

The issue to consider is not whether Hands-Only CPR is better, but will this technique create greater survivability? The answer is YES, IT WILL.

In a national survey, Americans who have not been trained in CPR within the last 5 years stated that they would be more likely to perform Hands-Only CPR than conventional CPR for an adult who collapses suddenly. In addition, Hands-Only CPR offers an easy to remember and effective option to those bystanders who have been previously trained in CPR but are afraid to help because they are not confident that they can remember and perform the greater number steps of conventional CPR. In short, Hands-Only CPR is easier and faster to administer, requires less training than CPR that includes mouth-to-mouth breathing, and most importantly, bystanders will be more likely to take action because they are less fearful because there is no mouth-to-mouth contact and there are fewer steps to administer.

When a victim suffers sudden cardiac arrest, the greatest enemy is "time". If action is not taken immediately, the chance to survive greatly diminishes. For every minute that passes before CPR commences, the survival rate decreases by 10%. And failure to act in a cardiac emergency can lead to unnecessary deaths.

According to the American Heart Association, effective bystander CPR provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest can double or triple a victim's chance of survival, yet only 32% of cardiac arrest victims get CPR from a bystander. Sadly, less than eight percent of people who suffer cardiac arrest outside the hospital survive. Hands-Only CPR is designed to enable any bystander to respond, even if they have not been certified in CPR. It is easy to learn, easy to perform, and IT SAVES LIVES!

Is a training course required to learn how to do Hands-Only CPR?

CPR is a psychomotor skill. The American Heart Association and the American Red Cross continue to recommend that individuals take a CPR course to practice and learn the skills of CPR, including giving high-quality chest compressions. People who have had CPR training are more likely to give high-quality chest compressions and are more confident about their skills than those who have not been trained (or have not trained in the last 5 years). Even a very short CPR training program that you can do at home, like the AHA's "22-minute CPR Anytime" program, provides skills training and practice that can prepare one to perform high quality chest compressions.

Will performing Hands-Only CPR seriously hurt a victim?

Adults who suddenly collapse and are not responsive are likely to have sudden cardiac arrest and their chance of survival is nearly zero unless someone takes action immediately. You should call 911 and start giving hard and fast chest compressions in the center of the chest, with minimal interruptions. If sudden cardiac arrest is the cause of the collapse, Hands-Only CPR is an easy, effective way for any bystander to more than double the victim's chance for survival. If an adult has collapsed for reasons other than sudden cardiac arrest, Hands-Only CPR could still help by causing the person to respond (begin to move, breathe normally or speak). If that occurs, Hands-Only CPR can be stopped. Otherwise, chest compressions should continue until medical help arrives.



Even if a person has not been trained in CPR, on average, any attempt to provide CPR to a victim is better than no attempt to provide help. While a victim can be injured during the course of CPR, the benefits received greatly outweigh the risk of injury. Remember, if no one responds and performs CPR, the victim will die unless medical help can arrive within ten minutes. And after five minutes, the chances for survival are very small. It is imperative that CPR commence immediately.

Conclusion

Sudden Cardiac Arrest is the leading cause of death in the United States, striking well over an estimated 383,000 Americans each year. According to the American Heart Association, of the estimated 250,000 people in the United States who suffer cardiac arrest outside a hospital each year, only about 5 percent live, and this is because only about 32% of cardiac arrest victims get CPR from a bystander. Many bystanders choose not to respond and perform CPR, despite being protected from liability by Good Samaritan Statutes.

As a place of business and transient lodging, it is certainly foreseeable that a hotel guest will suffer cardiac arrest at some point in time. Ideally, train and certify all employees in CPR and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). At a minimum, discuss with your employees the importance of responding immediately when a victim collapses and train them how to perform Hands-Only CPR. The American Heart Association, The American Red Cross, and many other medical organizations have brief videos posted on the Internet showing how to administer this life-saving technique. ✧

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