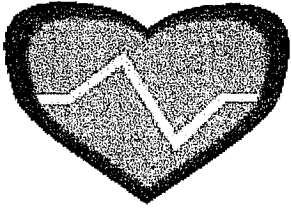


Automatic External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Overview

Nearly 350,000 people die each year from sudden cardiac arrest (SCA). Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) alone is not adequate to treat a person suffering from cardiac arrest.

According to the American Heart Association, the chances of surviving SCA decrease 10 percent with each passing minute that the heart beat is not returned to normal. Without prompt medical attention, it is rare for the victim to survive after 10 minutes. Unfortunately, experts can't tell us why SCAs occur nor how to prevent them. They do, however, tell us the best way to treat them—with an automatic external defibrillator (AEDs).



What is SCA?

The heart normally has a rhythmic beat. When someone experiences sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), the victim's heart stops beating normally, or beats erratically. Blood stops circulating adequately and the victim loses consciousness. Breathing stops and the person will die if they do not receive prompt medical attention.

What is an AED?

You've seen the full sized defibrillators used on television. When the doctor shouts "Clear" and shocks the patient's heart back into rhythm, they were using a defibrillator. AEDs work on the same principle, just a little differently.

First, the victim's chest is bared and all jewelry and medicine patches are removed, and electrodes are attached to the victims chest. The AED then checks for the presence of a shockable SCA event. The AED either prompts the operator to apply a shock to the victim's heart, or will prompt to continue CPR.

Training

Learning to use an AED is not difficult. Typically, the company which supplies the AEDs will also provide employee training. Extensive training is not needed. The devices themselves are easy to operate and instruct the operator on how to proceed.

Your instructor will explain how to receive the formal training. They will also inform you of how to summon emergency medical assistance, and who is designated as a "first responder." Also, they will point out the location of AEDs at your facility.