

FAQ

Sudden Cardiac Arrest and Automatic External Defibrillators

Q: What is sudden cardiac arrest (SCA)?

A: The killer of more than 400,000 people a year, sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) causes the heart's normal heart rhythm to suddenly become chaotic. The heart can no longer pump the blood effectively and the victim collapses, stops breathing, becomes unresponsive, and has no detectable pulse. SCA can strike anyone, anytime. Children, teenagers, athletes, old people -- can all have SCAs. Although the risk of SCA increases with age and in people with heart problems, a large percentage of the victims are people with no known risk factors.

Q: Is SCA the same as a heart attack?

A: No. Both the heart attack (myocardial infarction) and a sudden cardiac arrest have to do with the heart, but they are different problems. SCA is an electrical problem; a heart attack is a "plumbing" problem. Sometimes a heart attack, which may not be fatal in itself, can trigger a sudden cardiac arrest.

THE TREATMENT FOR SCA

Q: What is the recommended treatment for SCA?

A: Defibrillation is the only treatment proven to restore a normal heart rhythm. When used on a victim of SCA, the automated external defibrillator (AED) can be used to administer a lifesaving electric shock that restores the heart's rhythm to normal. AEDs are designed to allow non-medical personnel to save lives.

Q: How much time do I have to respond if someone has a sudden cardiac arrest?

A: Only minutes. Defibrillate within three minutes and the chances of survival are 70 percent. After 10 minutes, the chances of survival are negligible.

Q: I know CPR; wouldn't it help?

A: CPR only buys a little more time – potentially giving the victim a small amount of extra time until a defibrillator arrives. But SCA ultimately requires a shock to restore a normal heart rhythm. As a result, most CPR training now also includes AED training.

THE NEED FOR AN AED

Q: How does an AED work?

A: Two pads, connected to the AED, are placed on the patient's chest. A computer inside the AED analyzes the patient's heart rhythm and determines if a shock is required to save the victim. If a shock is required, the AED uses voice instructions to guide the user through saving the person's life.

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Q: Why do we need AEDs?

A: AEDs save lives. When a person has a sudden cardiac arrest, the heart becomes arrhythmic. Every minute that the heart is not beating lowers the odds of survival by 7 percent to 10 percent. After 10 minutes without defibrillation, very few people survive.

Q: What does the American Heart Association (AHA) say about AEDs?

A: The American Heart Association (AHA) strongly supports having AEDs in public areas such as sports arenas, office complexes, schools, doctors' offices, shopping malls, airports, and other public places. The AHA also advocates that all police and fire and rescue vehicles be equipped with an AED.

EASY TO USE

Q: Is an AED complicated to use?

A: AEDs are very easy to use. An AED can be used by practically anyone who has been shown what to do. In fact, there are a number of cases where people with no training at all have saved lives.

Q: Can a non-medical person make a mistake when using an AED?

A: AEDs are safe to use by anyone who has been shown how to use them. The AED's voice guides the rescuer through the steps involved in saving someone; for example, "apply pads to patient's bare chest" (the pads themselves have pictures of where they should be placed) and "press red shock button." Furthermore, safeguards have been designed into the unit precisely so that non-medical responders can't use the AED to shock someone who doesn't need a shock.

Q: Can the AED itself make a mistake?

A: It is unlikely. Studies show that AEDs interpret the victim's heart rhythm more quickly and accurately than many trained emergency professionals. If the AED determines that no shock is needed, it will not allow a shock to be given.

Q: Can I be sued if I help someone suffering from SCA?

A: State and federal "Good Samaritan" laws cover users who, in good faith, attempt to save a person from death. To date, there are no known judgments against anyone who used an AED to save someone's life.

Q: Has anyone been revived by using the Defibtech AED?

A: The Defibtech AED has saved many lives since its introduction to the market in 2003.

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MAINTENANCE

Q: How often must I change batteries?

A: The Defibtech AED comes with a lithium battery pack that is available in a 5- or 7-year size. If the unit is used frequently, the battery pack may have to be replaced more often. The AED will inform the user when the battery pack needs to be replaced.

Q: What else do I need to do to keep my AED in working order?

A: The pad package must be replaced every two years. Otherwise, the AED performs automatic self-checks on a daily basis to test its operational readiness. If anything is not fully functional, the unit will make a loud chirp and flash a red light warning the owner that servicing may be required.

BUYING AN AED

Q: Can anyone buy an AED?

A: Anyone can buy an AED. The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) rules require a physician's prescription (AEDs are manufactured and sold under guidelines approved by the Food and Drug Administration) before the unit can be delivered.

Q: What features should I look for in an AED?

A: Look for 1) an AED that is easy for non-medical people to use, 2) an AED that is technically reliable, and 3) one that is reasonably priced. Defibtech's AED more than meets all three requirements.

Q: Why is the Defibtech AED better than other AEDs?

A: Defibtech designed the unit from the ground up, building on a foundation of previous medical device knowledge and incorporating a number of design and technological innovations. As a result, the Defibtech AED is a state-of-the-art defibrillator designed for the non-medical person. Advanced design techniques and robotic assembly allow Defibtech to sell their AED at the lowest price in the market.

Q: What is your warranty?

A: The Defibtech AED has a 5-year warranty.

Q: How do I buy the Defibtech AED?

A: Contact Defibtech at 1-866-DEFIB-4-U (1-866-333-4248) or e-mail us at sales@defibtech.com