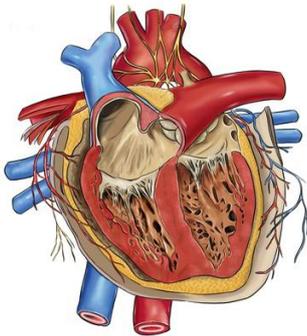


WHAT IS AN AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED)?

A defibrillator or AED is a life-saving machine that delivers an electric shock to the heart which when used promptly, in the case of sudden cardiac arrest or a heart attack.



When someone has a sudden cardiac arrest the heart commonly goes into a state of ventricular fibrillation (VF), a kind of wobbling muscle spasm rather than a proper heart beat which means that blood is not being pumped around the body. While it is in this state applying an electric shock from a defibrillator can restart the heart and help save that person's life. Performing CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation) helps to prolong the period of time that the heart remains in this shockable rhythm until defibrillation is available.

The UK Resuscitation Council estimates that there are around 30 000 cardiac arrests in the UK outside of hospital every year. So knowing how to perform CPR and increasing the number of AED's available in public places will directly increase the survival rates of cardiac arrest victims.

The scientific evidence to support early defibrillation is overwhelming; the delay from collapse to delivery of the first shock is the single most important determinant of survival. If defibrillation is delivered promptly, survival rates as high as 75% have been reported. The chances of successful defibrillation decline at a rate of about 8-10% with each minute of delay.

On all our first aid and AED courses you will be taught the best possible sequence of events to maximise the survival rate of people who have suffered cardiac arrest. This is known as the Chain of Survival. In an ideal world all of the steps would be performed simultaneously, of course if you are by yourself this will not be possible so the most important thing is to call 999 and ask anyone who comes to help you if they can quickly locate and AED in the building while you are performing CPR.

How does an AED work?

AEDs are designed to be used by members of the public and first aiders. They have become widely available, are safe and easy to use, and will not allow a shock to be given to a victim who does not require one.

Whilst there are many different types and manufacturer of AED the fundamentals are the same. When the unit is switched on a voice will talk loudly telling you what to do with clear and simple instructions. Pads are stuck onto the casualty's bare chest and the AED will receive information about the heartbeat which it then analyses to see if a shock can be delivered. If it can the AED will charge itself. No one must be touching the patient when the shock is delivered which typically happens at the press of a button.



Can I use an AED even if I have not been trained?

YES

The UK Resuscitation Council is very clear that *"the use of AEDs should NOT be restricted to trained personnel. Furthermore, the Resuscitation Council (UK) considers that it is inappropriate to display notices to the effect that only trained personnel should use the devices, or to restrict their use in other ways. Such restrictions are against the interests of victims of cardiac arrest, and discourage the greater use of AEDs by members of the public who may be able to preserve life and assist victims of cardiac arrest. This confirms similar advice from the British Heart Foundation."* Reference: <http://www.resus.org.uk/pages/AEDtrnst.htm>

Whilst anyone can use an AED, we highly recommend that people receive training first to ensure they understand the safety aspects and have the appropriate CPR skills.

For Further Information

Please visit our website at www.ppdssafetytraining.co.uk or call us on **01453 758475** for free impartial advice or to order your AED.