Plain Text Instructions to Support you in Learning the Steps to Save A Life

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# The Steps to Save A Life

CPR is a life-saving procedure performed when someone is in cardiac arrest. It helps to pump blood around the person’s body when their heart can’t. Without CPR the person will not survive. If a person has collapsed or is unconscious, follow these instructions.

1. Check for danger. Make sure the area is safe and you won't put your safety at risk by helping this person.
2. Check for the signs of a cardiac arrest. They will not be responsive and not breathing or not breathing normally. To check if they are responsive try shouting their name and give them a gentle shake by the shoulders. Look and listen for signs of normal breathing. Look for the even rise and fall of their chest. You could put your ear or cheek close to the person’s face if you feel safe to do so.
3. Call for help. Call 999 and the call handler will tell you exactly what you need to do. If others are nearby they may be asked to find and retrieve a Public Access Defibrillator (PAD).
4. If you are concerned about any risk of infection, you could place a cloth over the person’s mouth and nose before starting compressions.
5. Next, the call handler will instruct you to start chest compressions. Put your hands in the centre of their chest and interlock your fingers. Push hard and fast with your arms straight. The call handler will count along with you to keep you going at the right pace. CPR needs to be continued until the ambulance arrives. If there is more than one person there able to perform CPR you can swap out every one to two minutes. When someone is in cardiac arrest any CPR is better than no CPR. These steps can help save a life and you can make a difference by sharing this information with others.

# Hands-Only CPR for an adult in cardiac arrest:

Compression-only CPR involves pushing hard and fast in the centre of the chest. The patient needs to be on a hard surface and to perform CPR effectively you will need to kneel next to them. Get up on your knees and put your hands in the centre of their chest interlocking your fingers. Push hard and fast with your arms straight. Use the weight of your whole body to push down, having one hand on top of the other makes you stronger. Let the chest come back up between pushes. You want to push about 2 times per second or to the beat of “Staying Alive” by the Bee Gees. CPR can be quite hard work so if there are other people around you can swap in and out. You want to continue this until the emergency services arrive. You cannot harm someone in cardiac arrest. Any CPR beats no CPR.

# Public Access Defibrillator (PAD) overview:

Pushing hard and fast on the chest buys time for emergency services to arrive when someone has had a cardiac arrest. Sometimes there may be a device nearby that can help the heart get back to it’s normal rhythm. This is called a Public Access Defibrillator. It is sometimes called a PAD or AED for short. No formal training is required to use a PAD and you cannot harm a person by using a PAD. When you call 999 the call handler may instruct others around you to go get a nearby PAD. These may be in a building or in a box outside of a building. It is important that CPR is not stopped at any point when getting the PAD or getting it switched on.

Once you turn the PAD on it will give you audio instructions. It will instruct you to place two sticky pads on the bare chest of the patient. To do this you will need to remove the person’s clothing over their chest.

The PAD often will have a pair of scissors to help you do this. The machine and sometimes the pads have pictures of where to stick the pads to the person. One pad is to be placed below the right shoulder on the chest and the other pad is to be placed on the left below the nipple. Once in place, the machine will then automatically analyse the patient’s heart rhythm and determine if they require a shock. At this time stop CPR and do not touch the person. It may then instruct you to push a flashing button. Make sure you or anyone else is not touching the person and CPR has stopped briefly. Press the flashing button to deliver the shock. You should then carry on with CPR. You don’t need to remove the pads once they are in place, just keep them on the person.

The device will then set a timer for 2 minutes and you keep doing CPR all the time. After 2 minutes it will tell you to stop CPR so it can analyse the heart rhythm. It may ask you to deliver another shock.

Sometimes the heart does not need a shock but the person still needs CPR. In this case the device will tell you that no shock is required and to start CPR. The device will ask you to stop CPR every 2 minutes to check the heart rhythm and you should keep doing CPR until it tells you to stop again so it can analyse the heart rhythm again.

The PAD doesn’t get it wrong so you don’t have to decide whether the person needs a shock. Just do what it tells you and don’t forget to do CPR

The call handler will be with you the whole time, you will not be alone. CPR and use of a PAD can help save someone's life. You cannot do more harm than good by trying your best.

# Thank you for learning about the Steps to Save A Life

Thank you for learning about the steps to save a life. If you have any questions about the steps to save a life, hands only CPR, or PADs then please get in touch with us by emailing us at hello@savealife.scot and we will be happy to help.

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