



Public Access Defibrillation Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is sudden cardiac arrest?

A. Sudden cardiac arrest is a condition in which the heartbeat stops abruptly, due to an electrical "short circuit", often without warning signs. This usually is caused by ventricular fibrillation, when the main ventricle of the heart quivers uncontrollably due to the electrical failure and cannot pump blood. Rapid defibrillation is the only effective treatment for this. Sudden cardiac arrest results in death if not treated immediately.

Q. Who is at risk for sudden cardiac arrest?

A. While the average age of sudden cardiac arrest victims is about 65, sudden cardiac arrest is unpredictable and can strike anyone, anywhere, anytime. In the Niagara Region we have had sudden cardiac arrest victims as young as 16.

Q. Is sudden cardiac arrest the same as a heart attack?

A. No. A heart attack is a condition in which a blood clot suddenly blocks a coronary artery, resulting in the death of heart muscle supplied by that artery. The correct medical term for Heart Attack is Myocardial Infarction (M.I.). Heart attack victims usually experience chest pain and usually remain conscious. Heart attacks (M.Is) are serious and may lead to cardiac arrest. However, sudden cardiac arrest may occur independently from a heart attack and without warning signs. Sudden cardiac arrest results in death if defibrillation does not take place within 8 minutes. The earlier the defibrillation (a shock is administered) the better chance of survival.

Q. What about CPR?

A. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is essential to the resuscitation process. While awaiting defibrillation, the probability of survival is improved when the victim receives CPR. This may extend the amount of time that a patient can still be successfully defibrillated.

Q. What is an automated external defibrillator?

A. An automated external defibrillator (AED), is a device that automatically analyzes heart rhythms and advises the rescuer on how to proceed with the resuscitation of the victim, including delivering an electric current if the heart is in ventricular fibrillation, an otherwise fatal heart rhythm.

Q. How does it work?

A. AEDS are automated -- they take the decision making process out of the hands of rescuers and place it in an internal computer chip. They don't use paddles but instead have pads called electrodes that are easily placed on the victim's chest. These pads have a diagram right on them as to the correct placement of them. The device uses a recorded message to give step by step instructions to the rescuer. The AED analyses the heart and will only deliver a shock to the victim if it detects the presence of cardiac rhythms that require defibrillation. If the victim is not in cardiac arrest, the AED will not deliver a shock.

Q. Do I have to be medically trained to use an AED?

A. No. AEDS can be safely used by CPR certified people after four hours of AED training. Heart Niagara Inc. has successfully trained individuals as young as 10 years of age.

Q. Shouldn't we wait until the ambulance arrives?

A. Emergency medical rescuers do a fantastic job, but due to geographical limitations it is physically impossible, in the majority of cases to reach the victim quickly enough to give rapid, lifesaving defibrillation. Why? Because for every minute that passes after sudden cardiac arrest, chances of survival drop by 10%.

Q. What if I forget the steps for shocking a victim?

A. The steps for shocking a victim in cardiac arrest are simple and straightforward. Just follow the visual and audio prompts provide by the AED.



Why should our Organization place Defibrillator in the Workplace?

With early defibrillation, many cardiac arrest patients survive to remain productive contributors to our society. The earlier the shock, the more likely a victim will survive. That is why we need defibrillators in the workplace.

The benefits of this program can be looked at from several different angles.

Cardiac arrest occurs at the rate of 1 per 1000 of population per year. However, the workforce in industry is predominantly male, over the age of 25. The older, the more likely to arrest. Therefore, in Niagara, 3-4 per 1000 cardiac arrests per year in industry is more likely. Studies show that 70% of cardiac arrest survivors go back to the same job they were doing before the arrest. PAD studies show between 10-50% survival - the quicker the shock, the better the save rate. Those saved will continue to be productive employees for your organization.

Consider if the person saved is an executive of the corporation. The cost of replacing a senior executive is considerable, so a "save" in the front office is a major cost savings as well. Cost savings include: cost of executive search, payment of benefits, cost to have the new executive learn the new role etc.

The intangible savings in the demonstration by management that they care about the employee on the floor. By instituting a "defib" program management shows a commitment to the well being of their workers, in making the workplace "Heart Safe". Public access defibrillation... we all save in many ways.

Why use the PAD Program at Heart Niagara Inc.?

Heart Niagara Inc. (HNI) developed a team with an extensive background in pre-hospital care to take the lead role in implementing **Community Public Access Defibrillation Program**. HNI is recognized in the Niagara Region as the most appropriate organization to introduce the Community Public Access Defibrillation Program. Heart Niagara Inc. will provide comprehensive defibrillation training, advocating for timely access to defibrillation throughout the Niagara Region.

The Public Access Defibrillation Program Medical Director, Dr. Douglas Munkley served as Medical Director of the Niagara Regional Base Hospital Paramedic Program and is the Director of the Regional Firefighter Defibrillation Program. He has both the experience and expertise to provide corporations and individuals with the highest quality service. Currently there are over 270 defibrillators and 2,500 individuals in the Niagara Region who operate under his medical license. The Heart Niagara Public Access Defibrillation Program instructors are knowledgeable, creditable and experienced.



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