

CPR and AEDs Save Lives

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In the US, survival rates from sudden cardiac arrest are very low, being at less than 5%.* Statistics show that between 70% and 80% of all cardiac arrests occur in the home. This means that in most cases, family members are going to be the responding person in the event of a sudden cardiac emergency. If the family member is trained in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), they can be a potential lifesaver for their loved one. CPR is an emergency procedure that is used when someone's heart has stopped beating, or if they are no longer breathing. The first 4 to 6 minutes are critical. The first responder needs to call 911 and alert emergency medical services as soon as possible. In many rural areas it could be 20 to 30 minutes or more before an ambulance arrives on the scene.

If oxygen and blood are not circulating through the victim's body, they will die in 4 to 6 minutes. What this means is that a person delivering CPR is critical in the chain of survival and keeps the victim's brain alive until emergency medical help arrives. During the first 4 to 6 minutes after a cardiac arrest, the victim will be in clinical death. Clinical death is reversible; the victim can be resuscitated while in this state. After 4 to 6 minutes without any care, the victim will go into biological death, a state which is not reversible. CPR will not usually revive a person but it keeps circulation going to the brain and other vital organs. This keeps the person viable so that they can be resuscitated when the emergency squad comes onto the scene with a defibrillator.

In addition to CPR, another important lifesaving tool is an automated external defibrillator, or AED. An AED uses sensor pads attached to the victim's torso to analyze the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, delivers an electrical shock to the heart. AEDs are very simple to use. They use voice prompts to tell the first responder what to do. The AED can deliver a shock to the victim if needed to get the victim's heart to beat properly. There are AEDs located in many public buildings now. As time goes on, AEDs will be seen in more public places because they save lives.

Take the time to learn CPR. Knowing this valuable skill can mean that you could save the life of one of your family members. Or, it could be you that suffers a cardiac emergency and need CPR. NYCAMH offers CPR training for certification through the American Heart Association. These services are made available at no cost to farmers, farm workers, and farm families in New York through funding provided by the New York State Department of Health. NYCAMH can also train and certify for AED use and First Aid. We can deliver any of this training right at your farm at a time that is most convenient for you.

In addition, NYCAMH is available to provide safety training at no cost to agricultural operations in New York. All of our training can also be delivered in Spanish. If you would like to schedule a CPR, First Aid, on-farm safety training session, or a farm safety survey, please contact me at 800-343-7527, ext 239 or e-mail me at jcarrabba@nycamh.com. NYCAMH, a program of Bassett Healthcare Network, is enhancing agricultural and rural health by preventing and treating occupational injury and illness.

*Statistics quoted in this article are from the Otsego County Office of Emergency Services.