

AED and CPR

Sudden cardiac arrest can strike individuals of any age at any time. It is, in fact, one of the leading causes of death, resulting in more than 250,000 deaths per year in the United States. That is one death every two minutes. According to the American Heart Association, as many as 50% of cardiac arrest victims have no prior indication of heart disease. The cardiac arrest is their first symptom even in a seemingly healthy person.

Cardiac arrest is caused by a sudden loss of heart function. It is usually caused by an abnormal heart rhythm called ventricular fibrillation. The heart normally sends one signal which causes the heart to contract and pump blood through the body. When this ventricular fibrillation rhythm occurs, there are many signals being sent. There is no coordinated rhythm, the heart quivers and no blood is circulated.

Ventricular fibrillation is a rhythm that can be treated. The cure is immediate treatment with a defibrillator, a device that shocks the heart out of the fatal rhythm and allows normal heart beat to resume. In order for this shock to be successful, it must be delivered as early as possible after the cardiac arrest. The chance of survival for the victims of cardiac arrest declines by 10% for each minute that passes without defibrillation. If the cardiac arrest person does not receive defibrillation within 10 minutes, the chance of survival is almost zero

(CHART)

Nationwide, 5 to 7% of cardiac arrest victims survive. The American Heart Association research shows that four actions can increase the chance of survival. These actions are known as the Chain of Survival. These four actions are Early Access, Early CPR, Early Defibrillation and Early Advanced Cardiac Care. Wakulla EMS works in cooperation with the American Heart Association, hospitals, the Wakulla Health Department Wakulla County Sheriff's Office and individuals from the community to help strengthen all four links in the chain of survival. The following are some of the efforts being made:

- a. Early Access – The enhanced 9-1-1 dispatch system receives information and dispatches the appropriate First Responders and Medical assistance. The new AVL grant and the remapping of the County roads helps to assist in faster response.
- b. Early CPR – Numerous agencies provide CPR in both Wakulla County and adjoining Leon County. The Health Department offers CPR courses and some members of the Wakulla EMS staff provide CPR courses when they are off duty.
- c. Early Defibrillation – Through grants obtained by EMS, Automated External Defibrillators (AED) have been placed in several public locations. These include the High School, the Recreation Park, the Library and several other locations. Recently a grant placed an AED in every Sheriff's officers car and with many First Responders.

d. Early Advanced Cardiac Care –The ambulance is equipped with up to date equipment such as cardiac monitor/defibrillators that allow 12 lead ECG 's for cardiac rhythm identification and cardiac drugs for treatment. Each ambulance has crews trained in use of the equipment, analysis of needs and treatments. The First Responders located throughout the County provide a first line of treatment and the addition of the third ambulance station has now reduced the response time of the ambulance.

Learn more:

- **What is An AED**
- **What Citizens of Wakulla County Can Do**
- **Register your AED**
- **CPR Anytime**