

Performing CPR can double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival

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Cardiac arrest – an electrical malfunction in the heart that causes an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia) and disrupts the flow of blood to the brain, lungs and other organs - is a leading cause of death. Each year, over 420,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests occur in the United States. When a person has a cardiac arrest, survival depends on immediately getting CPR from someone nearby.

Edward Stapleton, Associate Professor and Director of Pre-hospital Education, Department of Emergency Medicine, Stony Brook University School of Medicine, is urging everyone to learn CPR and talks about the importance of mastering this life-saving technique.

On September 7, Stapleton is planning to set a record for the largest CPR training event in the United States. Stony Brook Medicine's Hands-Only CPR Training Event will be held at LaValle Stadium at Stony Brook University with the goal of training over 5,000 people in order to improve survival and make our homes, schools and workplaces a safer environment.

"Hands-Only CPR has just two easy steps— If you see a teen or adult suddenly collapse, first, call 9-1-1; and then push hard and fast in the center of the chest," says Stapleton.

When a person collapses suddenly and isn't breathing or has no pulse, bystanders are often reluctant to assist with CPR for fear of doing it wrong or making the situation worse. Because less than one-third of sudden [cardiac arrest](#) victims receive pre-hospital CPR, the American Heart Association is now promoting hands-only CPR, and Stapleton couldn't agree more.

"Hands-Only CPR has been shown to be as effective as conventional CPR for [sudden cardiac arrest](#) at home, at work or in public," says Stapleton. "Hands-only CPR can help a cardiac arrest victim survive until emergency medical services arrive."

According to the American Heart Association, 90 percent of people who suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrests die. CPR, especially if performed immediately, can double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival.

During Hands-Only CPR, there is no use of mouth-to-mouth breathing. You use only your two hands to push hard and fast in a rhythmic motion in the center of the victim's chest. Training is necessary to ensure proper technique.

"It's helpful to keep pushing to the beat of the disco song 'Stayin' Alive,'" says Stapleton. "People feel more confident performing Hands-Only CPR and are more likely to remember the correct rate when trained to the beat of a familiar song."

Stapleton says learning CPR is a valuable and vital life-saving skill. Approximately 80% of cardiac arrests occur at home. "CPR performed by family and friends can increase survival from sudden cardiac arrest by two to three-fold."

Provided by Stony Brook University

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