

What is an AED?

AED Stands for Automated External Defibrillator

It's a small electronic device that is designed to allow non-medical professionals to provide a lifesaving electric shock to the heart, known as defibrillation, to sudden cardiac arrest victims. The delivery of an electrical shock to a heart experiencing sudden cardiac arrest briefly stops all electrical activity in the heart. This brief break from the previous electrical chaos can be enough for the heart to restart with a normal rhythm. With access to an AED, you have the opportunity to save a life.

Unlike the defibrillators seen on medical TV shows, AEDs are small, lightweight and very easy to operate. They are about the size of a lunch box and have adhesive electrode pads that rescuers attach to the victim's chest.

An AED is very simple to use yet contains the same sophisticated defibrillation technology relied on by paramedics and physicians.



LIFEPAK CR® Plus Defibrillator

How Does An AED Work?

An AED is programmed to tell rescuers exactly what to do using voice and visual prompts. Rescuers attach adhesive electrode pads to the victim's chest. Through these electrodes, the AED is designed to automatically analyze the electrical activity of the victim's heart to determine if a "shockable" rhythm is present. While AED users should be trained in CPR and AED use, an AED is so easy to use even untrained school children can operate one quickly and correctly.¹



Turn on the device



Place electrodes on chest



Stand clear

With voice prompts and pictures, the AED guides rescuers through the resuscitation process, advising when to give CPR. If the AED determines the victim's heart needs a shock, it tells rescuers to stand back so a shock can be safely given through the adhesive electrode pads affixed to the victim's chest. (Note: Some AED models will tell the user to push a button to shock and then 'stand clear' of the victim, while others are fully automatic and will automatically give the shock after giving rescuers a 'stand clear' warning.)

Not everyone can be saved from sudden cardiac arrest. But early defibrillation, especially when delivered within three to five minutes of a person's collapse from sudden cardiac arrest, does provide the best chance for survival.

1. Gundry J, et al. 1999. Comparison of naïve sixth-grade children with trained professionals in the use of an automated external defibrillator. *Circulation*. 100:1703-7.

LIFEPAK AEDs require a prescription in the U.S. Please consult your physician.

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