

CottageHouseCall

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Don't Know CPR? Here's What To Do Until Help Arrives

Nearly 80 percent of cardiac arrests that occur out of the hospital are witnessed by a family member at home – and just 6 percent of these sudden cardiac arrest victims survive. Why? Because most of the people who witness a heart attack don't know how to correctly perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

CPR – a combination of rescue breathing and chest compressions – helps to deliver enough blood flow to the heart, brain and vital organs of a person in cardiac arrest to sustain them until medical help arrives.

If you're recently CPR trained and confident of the steps to take, begin CPR using a combination of breaths and chest compressions. If you're not trained or unsure about the process, begin CPR using chest compressions only. Some simple steps to follow:

- Assess the situation. If they appear unconscious, tap or shake his or her shoulder and loudly ask if they're okay.
- If there is no response, call 911 and begin CPR. If you are not the only person on the scene, one person can call 911 while the other begins CPR.
- Begin rescue breathing: Open the victim's airway by tilting their head back and lifting their chin. With your ear next to the victim's open mouth, watch for his or her chest rising and falling, listen for air. If there is no breathing, pinch the victim's nose, make a seal over the victim's mouth with your own, and blow a breath big enough to make the victim's chest rise and fall, then repeat with a second breath.
- Begin chest compressions: Place the heel of your hand in the middle of the victim's chest, and the other hand on top of the first with your fingers laced together. Compress the chest about 1_ to 2 inches, keeping the heel of your hand in contact with the breastbone (don't let your hand bounce). When the chest rises back up, compress it again. Perform 30 compressions in 20 seconds.
- Repeat two rescue breaths, followed by 30 more chest compressions. Continue this process for about two minutes.
- Stop compressions and recheck victim for breathing. If the victim is not breathing, continue chest compressions and rescue breaths until help arrives.

Keep these guidelines in a visible household spot. Consider taking a CPR class at American Red Cross in Galesburg.

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