5-minute safety talk

Sudden Cardiac Arrest and the **Power of AEDs**

Un paro cardíaco repentino es la causa principal de muerte cada año, y puede sucederle a cualquier persona en cualquier momento. Es importante tener un plan de respuesta para emergencias en caso de paro cardíaco. Varios factores pueden aumentar el riesgo de sufrir un paro cardíaco repentino, como por ejemplo si usted trabaja en turnos, si trabaja cerca de altos voltajes eléctricos, o si tiene un trabajo muy estresante.

Alrededor de la mitad de las personas que sufren paros cardíacos repentinos experimentan un ritmo cardíaco anormal, llamado fibrilación ventricular. Esto genera impulsos eléctricos caóticos en el corazón, que rápidamente llevan a una pérdida de conciencia, paro cardíaco y respiratorio. Con cada minuto que pasa, disminuye drásticamente la esperanza de recuperación completa de un paro cardíaco repentino.

Cuando alguien cae víctima de un paro cardíaco repentino, siga estos cuatro importantes pasos para lograr el mejor resultado posible:

1. Identifique la emergencia y comience con su plan de respuesta ante emergencias, asegurándose de llamar al servicio de emergencias (9-1-1) o al número local de emergencias.
2. Haga que un socorrista entrenado comience la resucitación cardiopulmonar (RCP).
3. Haga que un socorrista entrenado utilice un Desfibrilador Externo Automático (DEA).
4. Permita que los profesionales de emergencias médicas provean una atención médica oportuna.
5. Integrated post-cardiac arrest care.

Early defibrillation is the only effective treatment for ventricular fibrillation because it shocks the heart to help restore a normal rhythm. AEDs make it possible to begin defibrillation before Emergency Medical Services arrive, saving precious time. This is not to diminish the importance of early CPR if an AED is not readily available. CPR can be started immediately when a responder arrives on the scene. Early CPR can make defibrillation more successful by allowing blood and oxygen to continue to flow to the heart and brain. However, the quicker defibrillation can begin the better, and by extending the window of time during which defibrillation can occur.

AEDs are easy to use even by rescuers untrained in their use. However, training can increase a rescuer's confidence level. Training is required of rescuers in some states. Here are some important considerations to remember:

- All national, state, and local regulations with regard to AEDs must be followed.
- In many states, AED programs must be overseen must be overseen by a medical professional.
- Local Emergency Medical Services should be made aware of your AED program.
- All emergency responders should be trained in both CPR and the use of AEDs, and follow-up training should be conducted at least every 2 years.
- AEDs should be properly maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions; a checklist may be helpful.
- All employees should be aware of your AED program and know where all your AEDs are located.
- AEDs should be systemically located so they can be reached within 2 minutes or less of any person who falls victim to sudden cardiac arrest.
- AEDs should be inspected regularly to make sure they are in good working order and that all the necessary supplies are readily available and have not reached their expiration date.
- It is important to run practice drills, even at off-site locations where some workers may perform their jobs. Make sure the AEDs are not located too far away to be effective.

While sudden cardiac arrest can occur for multiple reasons, it is always important to take good care of your health. Regular exercise, a healthy diet, not smoking, controlling blood pressure, maintaining normal weight, and controlling stress can lessen your chances for cardiovascular disease, a leading contributor to sudden cardiac arrest.

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