

WHAT IS CARDIAC ARREST



CARDIAC ARREST IS DIFFERENT TO A HEART ATTACK

Cardiac arrest is an *electrical problem* and is the term given to the sudden loss of heart function. The heart is no longer pumping blood and oxygen around to the vital organs of the body. Signs of a cardiac arrest are present when a person is unconscious, unresponsive, no pulse and has absent or abnormal breathing.

There are generally no warning signs or symptoms. The person is considered clinically dead. CPR and defibrillation are critical to survival.



A heart attack is a *plumbing problem* where there are one or more blockages preventing blood flow and the heart muscle dies. Symptoms can include chest pain, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, etc. The person is conscious. The person suffering a heart attack requires immediate medical attention. A severe heart attack may lead to a cardiac arrest.



WHAT CAUSES CARDIAC ARREST?

Heart Conditions:

Heart Disease
 Severe Heart Attack
 Genetic Heart Condition
 (Family History)

Accidents/Incidents:

Drownings
 Drug Overdoses
 Trauma

Respiratory:

Severe Asthma
 Severe Anaphylaxis

NATIONAL STATISTICS:

Across Australia each year, approximately 30,000 individuals experience an out of hospital cardiac arrest. Approximately 7,500 occur in New South Wales alone.

09 Survival from out of hospital cardiac arrest is less than 9%

10 For every minute that passes, the individual's chance of surviving decreases by 10%

04 Without any response of CPR, brain damage can start to occur within 4 minutes

08 With no CPR or defibrillation, there is little chance of surviving cardiac arrest past 8-10 minutes

10 Average response times of Ambulance in Metro Sydney is approximately 10 minutes

ACTIONS TO SURVIVE A CARDIAC ARREST:

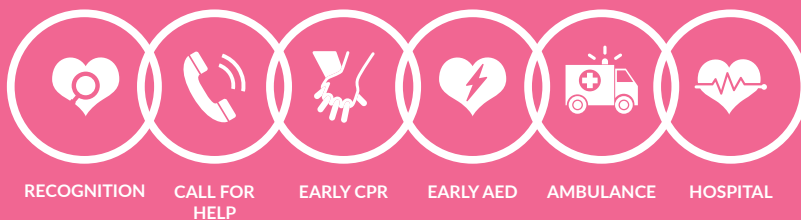
The three critical actions that are required to attempt to save a person who experiences a cardiac arrest are: Call 000, followed by effective cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

CPR is used to replicate the heart function to circulate blood and oxygen to vital organs. CPR attempts to keep the person alive prior to the Ambulance arrival & buys additional time.

The AED is used to provide a shock to the person's heart in an attempt to restart it. It must be used in conjunction with CPR!

If the heart restarts, the person will start to show signs of consciousness and breath on their own.

Depending on the cause of the cardiac arrest and the general health of the person, not everyone will survive a cardiac arrest. Any attempt to save a life is always recommended.



The Cardiac Chain of Survival is recognised Internationally as a set of actions that are required to increase a person's chance of surviving a cardiac arrest. If the links in the chain align and are done quickly, the person's chance of survival can increase from less than 9% to more than 60%.

DRSABCD is taught in basic first aid in Australia and are steps that should be followed in every first aid emergency. It is also how to diagnose a person who is in cardiac arrest. If a person is *UNCONSCIOUS AND NOT BREATHING NORMALLY*, you need to call 000, commence chest compressions (CPR) and use a defibrillator (AED) if one is available.

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