Chain of Survival Activities to Implement in Your Own Community
The Chain of Survival: What is it?

As awareness of sudden cardiac arrest continues to be spread, there are several integral factors which contribute to the survival of these events. Taking early action is lifesaving.

1. Prevention & Preparedness
Witnessing an emergency event, making an immediate assessment of the situation, and deciding to act.

2. Early Recognition & Activation of 9-1-1
Confirming unresponsiveness and calling 9-1-1 or on-site emergency responders and following the instructions of the emergency dispatcher.

3. Early CPR
Beginning cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) immediately.

4. Early Defibrillation
Immediately retrieving and using an automated external defibrillator (AED) to restore the heart back into normal rhythm.

5. Early Advanced Life Support
Emergency medical services (EMS) responders begin immediate advanced life support including additional resuscitative measures and/or other therapies.

6. Post Cardiac Arrest Care
Seeking and receiving effective follow-up care after a sudden cardiac arrest.

7. Rehabilitation and Recovery
Providing patients with access to care in the form of medical, physical and mental support programs that address recovery challenges associated with surviving cardiac arrest.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest Facts

Did you know...

- Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is the leading cause of death in the United States, claiming approximately 300,000 lives each year (about 1,000 people a day).
- SCA victims usually collapse suddenly, without warning, and become unconscious. SCA leads to death if it is not treated immediately.
- SCA is not the same as a heart attack. Heart attack victims usually experience chest pain and are conscious.
- On average, only six percent of sudden cardiac arrest victims in the United States survive. But in some settings, survival rates of 20 percent have been achieved. If the chain of survival were properly implemented in our communities, more than 68,000 additional lives could be saved each year.
- The rationale for widespread deployment of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) is this: electrical therapy must be delivered immediately (ideally within five minutes of collapse) for it to be effective. Even the best emergency medical services (EMS) systems do not usually get to the scene this quickly.
- Victims of sudden cardiac arrest who collapse in public places are more likely than those who collapse at home to receive CPR and defibrillation, and to survive.
- Learning to use an AED is simple and intuitive. Formal training can take place in less than one hour, and even untrained bystanders have been able to use AEDs successfully in actual emergencies.
- The median age for victims of sudden cardiac arrest is 65, but many victims are much younger. Even children and teens have become victims, with the Heart Rhythm Society estimating that 5,000 – 7,000 youth in the U.S. die from SCA each year.
- Many AEDs now cost less than $1,500.
- Nearly one million Americans now have implantable cardioverter defibrillators (ICDs) which provide 24/7 protection and therapy for patients with high risk of SCA.