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HealthGUARD

Philip S. Chua, M.D.

CPR

What is CPR?

CPR stands for Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation, the strategy and technique of reviving a person who stopped breathing or whose heart stopped beating due to a heart attack or other causes of cardiac arrest.

Why is CPR vital?

Learning how to perform CPR is vital because one who knows how to do it effectively could save the life of a loved one. This knowledge could spell the difference between life and death. A significant number of CPR done have been successful, saving literally thousands and thousands of people. Indeed, knowing how to perform CPR properly is vital.

When should be CPR be done?

When confronted with a person who has collapsed, one should determine within 5 to 10 seconds (not minutes!) if the patient is breathing or not, if the pulse at the wrist by the base of the thumb is present or not (it is good to learn how to check the pulse beat before emergencies occur). Putting your ear right on top of the upper mid chest (between the left nipple and the breast bone where the heart is) is another way of checking if the heart is beating or not. This is a most crucial period, and time must not be wasted here. This determination of breathing and heart beat must not be more than 10 seconds. If in any doubt at all, it is safer to presume respiratory and cardiac arrest has taken place and CPR started without delay.

What is the crucial period?

The crucial period is the first 3 to 4 minutes after cardiac arrest or pulmonary (breathing) arrest. That is all the time the victim has to be revived successfully. Beyond that time, the chances of success becomes less and less as minutes go by. So, it is obvious that an efficient and super prompt CPR is the technique needed to be successful in saving lives of arrest victims.

What are the two types of CPR?

These are BLS (Basic Life Support) and ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life

Support). BLS is immediately available and can be done wherever you are. ACLS involves the use of drugs, oxygen, heart monitoring and other equipment (defibrillator to shock the arrested heart back to beating again), temporary pacemaker, etc. The main goal of BLS is to provide and re-establish ventilation (breathing) and systemic circulation (resumption of heart beat and blood flow all over the body, especially to the brain). In short, it is ABCD, A for Airway (making sure the mouth is clear of anything that will block breathing), B for breathing, C for circulation (chest compression) and D for definitive treatment (drugs, defibrillation, diagnostic aids, etc).

How long should CPR be done?

CPR should be continued until the paramedic or medical help arrives, or, at least, for an hour, if no expert help is not available or expected to come. There have been medical reports of victims of drowning in a body of water that is cold (like in a lake during winter) who were successfully revived after three (3) hours of continuous CPR. This is true especially among children. The ice cold water protects the brain and the other vital organs in the body from deteriorating due to lack of circulation and oxygen, since cold body temperature slows down the body metabolism and requires practically no oxygen during that temporary “hibernation.”

Can CPR be done to oneself?

Not in the strict sense of the word. But when one feels his/her heart rate is slowing down (which can cause dizziness and fainting), one can do “preventive CPR” by taking a big deep breath, holding the breath (not exhaling) and straining (like trying to move your bowels), and coughing hard for about 15 seconds or so. This should be repeated as long as the heart rate is still slower than normal (less than 60 per minute). This technique is called Valsalva Maneuver, which could also be done if the heart rate is too fast. Discuss this idea with your physician when you seek consultation for heart rhythm problem.

Philip S. Chua, M.D., is Cardiac Surgeon Emeritus of Northwest Indiana and currently the Chairman of Cardiovascular Surgery of the Cebu Cardiovascular Center at Cebu Doctors’ Hospital, Cebu City, Philippines. He is also Vice-President for Far East of the Cardiovascular Hospitals of America of Wichita, Kansas, a builder of heart centers in the United States and in Asia.