

CPR FAQs

Questions an Instructor Might Ask

Why do the courses teach compressions and breaths first?

Compressions are the most important skill of CPR. Studies have shown that students mastered CPR skills best when they began by practicing compressions and breaths, then the other skills, and then put it all together.

Why don't the lay rescuer courses teach jaw thrusts?

It's difficult for lay rescuers to open the airway with a jaw thrust. To make sure that the lay rescuer can open the airway, only head tilt–chin lift is taught. In addition, all methods of opening the airway can produce movement of an injured spine, so the jaw thrust may not be any safer than head tilt–chin lift.

Why is the ratio 3 students to 1 manikin?

The 3:1 ratio is used to optimize the amount of time each student practices with a manikin while also keeping the course length reasonable.

Why don't the lay courses teach students to reassess the victim's breathing?

Compressions are at the core of good CPR. Every time compressions are interrupted, the first few compressions are not as effective as later compressions. The more often the compressions are interrupted, the lower the victim's chance of survival.

Questions a Student Might Ask

Why don't we teach AED for infants?

Cardiac arrest in infants is most often caused by a problem with breathing that worsens over a short period of time. This means that an AED is less likely to be effective in infants compared with adults. Also, the 2010 AHA Guidelines for CPR and ECC recommend a more advanced defibrillator than an AED. This more advanced defibrillator is taught in other more advanced courses. Although an AED could be used for an infant, the science experts were concerned with adding another level of knowledge to this course because infant cardiac arrest is fairly uncommon and because the AED is much less likely to be needed. For these reasons, this topic is best left for more advanced courses.

Why isn't there choking practice for adults and children?

Actions to assist a person who is choking cannot be safely performed on other students in the classroom. Unfortunately, most manikins used in the classroom are not suitable for effective practice. Although we have included the choking practice before, it likely does not prepare people for a choking emergency because it can-

not be practiced correctly in the classroom. Rather than practice potentially incorrect techniques such as inadequate abdominal thrusts and to avoid risk of harm to other students, the choking practice was removed from the course.

Why don't we practice more with the AED?

The AED is easy to use. AED prompts are clear and students should follow them. There isn't a lot to teach. Plus, each AED has slightly different prompts, pad design, and basic operation. Fortunately, the prompts of any AED are sufficient to guide the user toward using it correctly. Students should use the AED as soon as it arrives. Students must know how to turn the AED on. That's why in the CPR test we ask students to turn the AED on. Once the AED is on, all the user needs to know is that the prompts must be followed.

We show a complete AED demonstration in the video so students can see exactly how the sequence works, and the first time students practice with an AED, they practice all the way up to giving a shock. Because the most important parts of AED use are using it quickly and turning it on (so the prompts start), those are the parts we test.

Is there a specific place to tap a person when checking for a response?

It doesn't matter where the person is tapped. For consistency, we teach tapping the shoulder in adults and children and tapping the foot in infant CPR.

Why are manikin shirts required?

Moving clothes out of the way is an essential part of CPR. Students need to practice moving clothes out of the way.

Can I get into legal trouble if I don't do CPR correctly?

Do CPR to the best of your ability. As long as you are trying to do the right thing and you are not trying to hurt the victim, Good Samaritan laws will protect you in most states.

I am afraid to give breaths without a mask. Should I just do nothing if I don't have a mask?

You might carry a mask with you. Some masks fold up very small and fit on a key ring. If your job requires you to use a mask and you don't have one, do compressions until someone with a mask arrives. Compressions alone are better than doing nothing.

Can I catch a disease such as hepatitis or AIDS by doing CPR?

CPR has been performed for years and there has never been a case of transmission of these diseases from victim to rescuer.

When should I stop CPR?

Stop when

- The person starts to respond
- Someone with more advanced training arrives and takes over
- You are too exhausted to continue or it is dangerous for you to continue, such as during an airplane landing (resume as soon as you can unfasten your seatbelt)

How do I give CPR to someone with an opening in the neck?

Some people have an opening that connects the airway directly to the skin. This is called a stoma. If the person needs breaths, give them directly into the stoma.

If I find a person on a bed, should I move her to the floor so that I have a hard surface under her back?

If you can, quickly move the person to a firm surface to give CPR. Make sure you support the head and neck. If you are alone and can't move the person, try to find something flat and firm. Slide it under the back to provide a firm surface.

What should I do if the person has dentures?

Leave them in place if possible. If they get in the way of creating an airtight seal, remove them.

Does the AHA endorse "cough CPR" for non-health-care providers?

No. "Cough CPR" doesn't work if the person doesn't respond. If you think you or someone else is having a serious medical emergency, phone your emergency response number (or 911).

Why don't we do a pulse check?

Even some healthcare providers have a hard time telling if there is a pulse within 10 seconds. It is better to give CPR to a person who has a pulse than to not give CPR to someone who needs it.

What should I do if the person vomits?

1. Turn the person's head to the side so the person doesn't choke.
2. Clear the mouth by sweeping it with a cloth or other material wrapped around your fingers.
3. Reposition the person and resume CPR.

If I am choking and alone, what should I do?

Although there is no science to support this recommendation, a person who is alone and choking may be able to give abdominal thrusts to himself over a hard object such as the back of a chair.