

CPR on a Child

What is it?

A lifesaving technique that's useful in many emergencies, such as a heart attack or near drowning, in which someone's breathing or heartbeat has stopped. The American Heart Association recommends starting CPR with hard and fast chest compressions. This hands-only CPR recommendation applies to both untrained bystanders and first responders.

The procedure for giving CPR to a child age 1 through puberty is essentially the same as that for an adult — follow the C-A-B steps. The American Heart Association says you should not delay CPR and offers this advice on how to perform CPR on a child:

Before you begin, check:

- Is the environment safe for the person?
- Is the person conscious or unconscious?
- If the person appears unconscious, tap or shake his or her shoulder and ask loudly, "Are you OK?"
- If the person doesn't respond and you're with another person who can help, have one person call 911 or the local emergency number and get the AED, if one is available. Have the other person begin CPR.
- If you are alone and have immediate access to a telephone, call 911 or your local emergency number before beginning CPR. Get the AED if one is available.
- As soon as an AED is available, deliver one shock if instructed by the device, then begin CPR.

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The American Heart Association uses the letters C-A-B to help people remember the order to perform the steps of CPR.

- **C:** compressions
- **A:** airway
- **B:** breathing

Chest compressions

Chest compressions

Airway being opened

Open the airway

Rescue breathing

Rescue Breathing

Compressions: Restore blood flow

If you are alone and didn't see the child collapse, start chest compressions for about two minutes. Then quickly call 911 or your local emergency number and get the AED if one is available.

If you're alone and you did see the child collapse, call 911 or your local emergency number first. Then get the AED, if available, and start CPR. If another person is with you, have that person call for help and get the AED while you start CPR.

1. Place the child on his or her back on a firm surface.
2. Kneel next to the child's neck and shoulders.
3. Place two hands (or only one hand if the child is very small) on the lower half of the child's breastbone (sternum).
4. Using the heel of one or both hands, press straight down on (compress) the chest about 2 inches (approximately 5 centimeters) but not greater than 2.4 inches (approximately 6 centimeters). Push hard and fast — 100 to 120 compressions a minute.

5. If you haven't been trained in CPR, continue chest compressions until the child moves or until emergency medical personnel take over. If you have been trained in CPR, open the airway and start rescue breathing.

Airway: Open the airway

If you're trained in CPR and you've performed 30 chest compressions, open the child's airway using the head-tilt, chin-lift maneuver.

- Place your palm on the child's forehead and gently tilt his or her head back.
- With the other hand, gently lift the chin forward to open the airway.

Breathing: Breathe for the child

Follow these steps for mouth-to-mouth breathing for a child.

1. After using the head-tilt, chin-lift maneuver to open the airway, pinch the child's nostrils shut. Cover the child's mouth with yours, making a seal.
2. Breathe into the child's mouth for one second and watch to see if the chest rises. If it rises, give a second breath. If the chest doesn't rise, repeat the head-tilt, chin-lift maneuver first, and then give the second breath. Be careful not to provide too many breaths or to breathe with too much force.
3. After the two breaths, immediately begin the next cycle of compressions and breaths. Note: If there are two people available to do CPR on the child, change rescuers every two minutes — or sooner if the rescuer is fatigued — and give one to two breaths every 15 compressions.
4. As soon as an AED is available, apply it and follow the prompts. As soon as an AED is available, apply it and follow the prompts. Use pediatric pads for children older than 4 weeks old and up to age 8. If pediatric pads aren't available, use adult pads. Give one shock, then restart CPR — starting with chest compressions — for two more minutes before giving a second shock. If you're not trained to use an AED, a 911 operator or another emergency medical operator may be able to give you directions.

Continue until the child moves or help arrives.

Revision #2

Created 3 March 2023 23:00:34

Updated 7 April 2023 15:18:34