



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → CPR

URL of this page: [//medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000010.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000010.htm)

## CPR

CPR stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. It is an emergency life-saving procedure that is done when someone's breathing or heartbeat has stopped. This may happen after a medical emergency, such as an electric shock, heart attack, or drowning.

CPR combines rescue breathing and chest compressions.

- Rescue breathing provides oxygen to the person's lungs.
- Chest compressions keep oxygen-rich blood flowing until the heartbeat and breathing can be restored.

Permanent brain damage or death can occur within minutes if blood flow stops. Therefore, it is very important that blood flow and breathing be continued until trained medical help arrives. Emergency operators at 911 or the local emergency number can guide you through the process.

CPR techniques vary slightly depending on the age or size of the person, including different techniques for adults and children who have reached puberty, children 1 year old until the onset of puberty, and infants (babies less than 1 year of age).

## Alternative Names

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

## References

- American Heart Association website. Highlights of the 2020 American Heart Association Guidelines for CPR and ECC.  
[cpr.heart.org/-/media/cpr-files/cpr-guidelines-files/highlights/hghlghts\\_2020\\_ecc\\_guidelines\\_english.pdf](https://cpr.heart.org/-/media/cpr-files/cpr-guidelines-files/highlights/hghlghts_2020_ecc_guidelines_english.pdf) [[https://cpr.heart.org/-/media/cpr-files/cpr-guidelines-files/highlights/hghlghts\\_2020\\_ecc\\_guidelines\\_english.pdf](https://cpr.heart.org/-/media/cpr-files/cpr-guidelines-files/highlights/hghlghts_2020_ecc_guidelines_english.pdf)]  
. Accessed March 24, 2023.
- Duff JP, Topjian AA, Berg MD, et al. 2019 American Heart Association focused update on pediatric basic life support: an update to the American Heart Association guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiovascular care. *Pediatrics*. 2020;145(1). PMID: 31727861  
[pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31727861/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31727861/) [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31727861/>].

Morley PT. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (including defibrillation). In: Bersten AD, Handy JM, eds. *Oh's Intensive Care Manual*. 8th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Elsevier; 2019:chap 21.

Panchal AR, Berg KM, Kudenchuk PJ, et al. 2018 American Heart Association focused update on advanced cardiovascular life support use of antiarrhythmic drugs during and immediately after cardiac arrest: an update to the American Heart Association guidelines for cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency cardiovascular care. *Circulation*. 2018;138(23):e740-e749. PMID: 30571262  
pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30571262/ [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30571262/].

## Review Date 1/2/2023

Updated by: Jesse Borke, MD, CPE, FAAEM, FACEP, Attending Physician at Kaiser Permanente, Orange County, CA. Also reviewed by David C. Dugdale, MD, Medical Director, Brenda Conaway, Editorial Director, and the A.D.A.M. Editorial team.

Learn how to cite this page



A.D.A.M., Inc. is accredited by [URAC](#), for Health Content Provider ([www.urac.org](#)). URAC's [accreditation program](#) is an independent audit to verify that A.D.A.M. follows rigorous standards of quality and accountability. A.D.A.M. is among the first to achieve this important distinction for online health information and services. Learn more about A.D.A.M.'s [editorial policy](#), [editorial process](#), and [privacy policy](#).

The information provided herein should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. A licensed medical professional should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions. Links to other sites are provided for information only – they do not constitute endorsements of those other sites. No warranty of any kind, either expressed or implied, is made as to the accuracy, reliability, timeliness, or correctness of any translations made by a third-party service of the information provided herein into any other language. © 1997-2025 A.D.A.M., a business unit of Ebix, Inc. Any duplication or distribution of the information contained herein is strictly prohibited.

