

## CPR FAQs

### ***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?***

The jaw thrust for opening an airway is a difficult technique to learn. 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 a maximum of 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. This also allows the instructor the ability to monitor and assist students.

### ***Why don't the lay courses teach students to reassess 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 person's chance of survival.

### ***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.

### ***Why isn't there practice for adult and child choking?***

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 cannot 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.

### ***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 of adults and children and tapping the foot of infants.

### ***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 person, Good Samaritan laws will protect you in most states.

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

You might carry a barrier device with you. Some barrier devices fold up very small and fit on a key ring. If your job requires you to use a barrier device and you don't have one, do compressions until someone with a barrier device arrives. Compressions alone are better than doing nothing for teens and adults. Children and infants should always be given compressions and breaths.

### ***Can I contract an infectious disease by doing CPR?***

While there is a risk of disease transmission, this risk is extremely small and should not deter you from performing CPR. Use of a barrier device may reduce the risk further. If you are unable or unwilling to provide breaths, perform Hands-Only CPR until advanced help arrives.

### **When should I stop CPR?**

Stop when

- The person starts to move
- 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 them to the floor so that I have a hard surface under their back?**

If you can, quickly move the person to a firm surface to give CPR if it is safe for you to do so without injury to yourself. 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"?**

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 9-1-1).

### **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.

### **What is the difference between cardiac arrest and heart attack?**

People often use the terms *cardiac arrest* and *heart attack* interchangeably, but they are not the same. As an instructor, it is important to know the difference:

- Cardiac arrest occurs when the heart malfunctions and stops beating.
- A heart attack occurs when blood flow to one part of the heart is blocked and the heart continues beating.