



American Heart Association®

Hard Hats with Heart™



Toolbox
Talks

CPR Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if I am getting tired from giving chest compressions before more help arrives?

Performing chest compressions correctly is hard work. The more tired you become, the less effective your compressions will be. If someone else knows CPR, you can take turns providing CPR. Switch rescuers about every 2 minutes, or sooner if you get tired. Move quickly to keep any pauses in compressions as short as possible. If you are alone, do your best to keep providing CPR. In addition, we also recommend that if the rescuer can help coach another person on how to do CPR, this would provide the opportunity to have multiple rescuers giving Hands-Only CPR until help arrives.

When do I stop giving Hands-Only CPR?

Continue pushing hard and fast in the center of the chest until help arrives. If the person speaks, moves, or breathes normally while you're giving chest compressions, Hands-Only CPR can be stopped.

Can you break people's ribs by doing CPR?

Yes, however the chance of potential injury is minimal compared to the opportunity to save a life by providing chest compressions. The chance of surviving an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest is zero for a person who does not immediately receive high-quality chest compressions with minimal interruptions followed by additional therapy within minutes (a defibrillating shock and/or more advanced care from EMS personnel).

I know Hands-Only CPR, do I still need to learn CPR with breaths?

CPR is a skill that can be improved with practice. The American Heart Association continues to recommend that you take a CPR course to practice and learn the skills of CPR, including giving high quality chest compressions. People who have had CPR training are more likely to give high-quality chest compressions and are more confident about their skills than are those who have not been trained (or have not been trained in the past five years). Even a short CPR training program that you can do at home, such as the American Heart Association's 20-minute CPR Anytime® program, provides skills training and practice that can prepare you to perform high-quality chest compressions.

Discussion Questions:

- What additional questions do you have about CPR?