



CEDARS-SINAI MEDICAL CENTER.

NEWS

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HIGHLIGHTS:

An estimated 70-80 percent of heart attacks occur at home, often suddenly and without warning. While cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can buy some time as families wait for paramedics, the only way to actually re-start the heart with a jolt of electricity is by using a defibrillator. Experts estimate that every minute spent waiting for a defibrillator lowers the chance of survival by 10 percent, so the sooner it can be used after a cardiac arrest, the better. Last month, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) approved for the first time, sale of a defibrillator specifically designed for home use.

**USE OF AT-HOME DEFIBRILLATORS STRONGLY SUPPORTED BY LEADING
CARDIOLOGIST**

LOS ANGELES (Dec. 3, 2002) – An estimated 70-80 percent of heart attacks occur at home, often suddenly and without warning. With the FDA's recent approval of at-home automated external defibrillators (AEDs), individuals and families who are at high-risk of having a heart attack now have another weapon available to them. Defibrillators are the only means of re-starting the heart with a jolt of electricity after a cardiac arrest. While cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) can help buy time, experts estimate that every minute spent waiting for paramedics to arrive with a defibrillator reduces the chances of survival by about 10 percent.

P. K. Shah, M.D., Director of the Division of Cardiology and the Atherosclerosis Research Center at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, believes that having the at-home defibrillators immediately available in the event of a heart attack is a good move for families and individuals at high risk. The key, he believes, will be in making sure that everyone in the household or involved in providing care to the individual be fully trained to provide CPR and to use the new defibrillators.

“I strongly endorse the idea of training family members or live-in companions of individuals at high risk of sudden death for both CPR and AED use,” he says. “These devices should definitely be available to families who are at risk.”

At-risk patients, Dr. Shah believes, include patients with congestive heart failure who are awaiting a heart transplant, families with a history of sudden death due to uncommon heart conditions (such as the genetically linked “Long QT Syndrome or hypertrophic cardiomyopathy), or when certain clinical criteria are met.

(more)

According to Dr. Shah, who is Director-at-Large of the American Heart Association's Western States Affiliate, it is important that people realize that their first action in the event of a heart attack is calling 9-1-1. "If cardiac arrest occurs, the first thing to do is call 9-1-1," he says. "Get help on the way, then begin CPR and if you have an AED and have been properly trained, use it."

Each year, about 220,000 American die of cardiac arrest, which strikes immediately and often without warning. It has been well documented that the earlier a patient received medical attention, the better his or her chances of survival will be.

Cedars-Sinai Medical Center is one of the largest nonprofit academic medical centers in the Western United States. For the fifth straight two-year period, it has been named Southern California's gold standard in health care in an independent survey. Cedars-Sinai is internationally renowned for its diagnostic and treatment capabilities and its broad spectrum of programs and services, as well as breakthrough in biomedical research and superlative medical education. Named one of the 100 "Most Wired" hospitals in health care in 2001, the Medical Center ranks among the top 10 non-university hospitals in the nation for its research activities.

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