

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



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## **First National CPR/AED Awareness Week**

### **American Heart Association Supports Training Efforts to Reduce Death and Disability**

**Fort Worth, Texas (May 30, 2008)** Each year, an estimated 166,000 lives are claimed by Sudden Cardiac Arrest, an electronic malfunction that causes rapid and chaotic heart activity. More people die from sudden cardiac arrest than from breast cancer, prostate cancer, AIDS, house fires, handguns and traffic accidents combined.

Next week (June 1 – 7) is the first **National CPR/AED Awareness Week**, an effort to encourage the public to get cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training and learn how to use an automated external defibrillator (AED) to reduce death and disability from sudden cardiac arrest.

The **American Heart Association** trains 10 million people in CPR annually, but more needs to be done. For victims of a sudden cardiac arrest, a bystander who performs immediate CPR and defibrillation with an AED could make a life or death difference. A recent [AHA survey](#) shows few Americans are confident they could actually perform CPR and use an AED to help save a life in an emergency cardiac situation.

Sudden cardiac arrest is not the same as a heart attack. Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when electrical impulses in the heart become rapid or chaotic, which causes the heart to suddenly stop beating. A heart attack occurs when the blood supply to part of the heart muscle is blocked. A heart attack may cause cardiac arrest.

- Each year, about 310,000 coronary heart disease deaths occur out-of-hospital or in emergency departments in the United States. Of those deaths, about 166,200 are due to sudden cardiac arrest – nearly 450 per day.
- Sudden cardiac arrest can happen to anyone at any time. Many victims appear healthy with no known heart disease or other risk factors. (According to survey results, less than 17 percent of Americans believe they are at risk for sudden cardiac arrest.)
- Less than one-third of out-of-hospital sudden cardiac arrest victims receive bystander CPR. Effective bystander CPR, provided immediately after sudden cardiac arrest, can double or triple a victim's chance of survival.
- The most effective rate for chest compressions is 100 compressions per minute – the same rhythm as the beat of the BeeGee's song, "*Stayin' Alive*."

A new [AHA video](#) is available on YouTube. Visit the new [National CPR & AED Awareness Week Web](#) site at for the latest news.

### **About the American Heart Association**

Founded in 1924, the American Heart Association today is the nation's oldest and largest voluntary health organization dedicated to building healthier lives, free of heart diseases and stroke. These diseases, America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers, and all other cardiovascular diseases, claim nearly 870,000 lives a year. In fiscal year 2006-07, the association invested more than \$554 million in research, professional and public education, advocacy and community service programs to help all Americans live longer, healthier lives. To learn more, call 1-800-AHA-USA1 or visit [americanheart.org](http://americanheart.org).

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