

First Aid Facts and Tips

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My name is Kathy Prather and I have been a licensed paramedic for almost 35 years working in a variety of areas within Emergency Medical Services (EMS). This includes rural Alberta (High River, Strathmore), way up north on a drilling rig and with the City of Calgary EMS for 25 years. I've owned an EMS business for many years that provides experienced paramedics to high-risk sporting events, Calgary Police Service and other venues in Calgary and surrounding areas. Hart Paramedical Inc. is honoured to have highly respected clients such as Spruce Meadows, Rocky Mountain Show Jumping, Teesdale Equestrian, Paramount Equestrian and MC Equestrian to name a few and it remains a privilege to provide professional services to such esteemed horse equestrian events.

I got into teaching First Aid and CPR early in my EMS career when I would respond to sudden death calls and find the family distraught because they were too terrified to do CPR (CPR courses back then were very intense). I decided then to start teaching and my main focus was to take away the fear and anxiety and make first aid training fun and easy to learn. I am passionate about teaching to a variety of individuals and professional groups.

Relevant facts

- Heart attacks and strokes are the most deadly diseases in Canada. More people die of cardiovascular disease than ALL the combined cancers! 29% of all deaths in Canada are from heart disease, claiming more than 33,600 lives per year.
- Every 7 minutes in Canada someone dies from heart disease or stroke... that's 206 people dying every day.
- Cardiovascular disease costs the Canadian economy more than \$20.9 billion every year
- Risk factors for heart disease
 - 9 in 10 Canadians have at least one risk factor for heart disease or stroke
 - 4 in 10 have three or more risk factors
 - Risk factors include smoking, stress, diabetes, obesity, alcohol, physical inactivity, age, family history, ethnicity (aboriginal people are 1.5 to 2 times more likely to develop heart disease than the general Canadian population)
 - More than 2 million Canadians have diabetes and it one of the most common chronic diseases in Canada and prevalence is on the rise
 - 59% of Canadians report being overweight or obese
 - Cities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia were significantly higher in obesity population than the national average for adults
- Signs & Symptoms of a Heart Attack
 - Vary from person to person and they may not always be

sudden or severe

- Chest pain is the most common symptom of a heart attack in both men and women, while some people will not experience chest pain at all
- Women, the elderly and the diabetic patients show signs and symptoms of a heart attack differently. May complain of back pain, indigestion or general malaise (extreme unexplained tiredness – usually a few days preceding a heart attack)
- Common symptoms are:
 - Denial
 - Chest pain (pressure, squeezing, burning or heaviness that can radiate to neck, jaw or even teeth)
 - Shortness of breath
 - Sweating
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Light-headedness

First Aid Treatment for Heart Attack

- Position the patient in a comfortable position (usually sitting)
- Remain calm!
- Call 911 to activate EMS
- Assist the patient with any medication they may have to help with possible heart attack or angina (nitroglycerin)
- Give acetyl salicylic acid (ASA) 325 mg and ensure they chew it! Also ensure they have no allergies to ASA, asthma, recent bleeding, head injury or signs/symptoms of stroke
- If the patient becomes unconscious and stops breathing (or is only gasping for air), start CPR and get an

AED

Stroke (brain attack)

- A stroke is an interruption in the flow of blood to the brain; there are two types of stroke:
 - oa blood clot blocks an artery (ischemic stroke) – this is the most common kind of stroke (80 %)
 - oa blood vessel breaks (hemorrhagic stroke) – 20% of strokes are due to aneurysms
- Signs/Symptoms – Use FACE acronym
 - FACE – is it drooping. Ask them to smile
 - ARMS – can you raise both arms?
 - SPEECH – is it slurred or jumbled (get them to repeat a simple sentence back to you; “It’s raining cats and dogs outside”. Or are they able to speak at all?
 - TIME: call 911 immediately if they have any of these symptoms
- First Aid Treatment for Stroke
 - Reassure and place in position of comfort – usually sitting
 - Monitor airway and breathing
 - Commence CPR if breathing stops
 - DO NOT give ASA to patients with Signs/Symptoms of a stroke!

If you have any questions please never hesitate to stop by and chat! You'll find me at most of the horse shows, reading a book or walking my much-loved Airedale Baloo. Better yet, book a CPR course and learn to save a life!