

Two online tools to aid heart patients

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ABOUT 1,000 Singaporeans suffer sudden cardiac arrest outside hospital every year. Only 27 survive.

To save more lives, the Singapore Heart Foundation (SHF) launched two online tools yesterday – the automated external defibrillator (AED) **registry** and the heart-age calculator.

The registry lets people know where they can find an AED, a machine that detects cardiac rhythm.

The device determines whether someone who fainted is suffering a heart attack. Even if the user has no knowledge of cardiopulmonary **resuscitation** (CPR) technique, the AED can prompt him on the various steps to take for resuscitation using the device.

It uses an electric current of 150 joules to jump-start the heart. Hospital defibrillators typically use currents of 150 to 300 joules.

Associate Professor Terrance Chua, SHF chairman and National Heart Centre deputy medical director, said the registry is useful for cardiovascular patients and their family members.

“In the event that something happens, knowing where an AED is available would improve the chances of survival,” he told *my paper*.

The registry would also encourage more public places to install AEDs, which cost around \$2,500 to \$3,000 each. Currently, 70 places, such as country clubs, hotels, shopping centres and schools are listed.

AEDs were not widely available previously because they have been introduced as first-aid kits only in the last two years, said Prof Chua.

“More public education about the device is needed so that more people can be trained not just in CPR, but also in AED use,” he said.

This would help raise the survival rate of heart-attack victims here to four in 10, on par with cities such as Seattle in the United States.

Meridian Junior College added an AED this July to boost safety in the school, said deputy head of co-curricular activities Eric Chua.

In 2006, a middle-aged man collapsed when running on the school field one evening.



LIFESAVER: Automated external defibrillators such as this one use electric currents to jump-start the heart.

The field, which was co-shared with the Singapore Sports Council, is open to the public after school hours.

Besides the registry, the heart-age calculator estimates a person's likelihood of suffering cardiovascular diseases, such as heart attack and **stroke**, which claim over 5,000 lives annually.

Users input details such as their body mass index and blood pressure into a calculator on the SHF website.

Those whose “heart age” is older than their actual age are recommended to **consult** doctors or change their lifestyle habits.

Both initiatives are part of World Heart Day, celebrated on Saturday and Sunday at the open field next to Causeway Point in Woodlands.

For more details, visit www.myheart.org.sg

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HELPDESK 我的字典

Registry: 注册表 zhù cè biǎo

Resuscitation: 复苏 fù sū

Stroke: 中风 zhòng fēng

Consult: 咨询 zī xún