

CPR for Women: Key Considerations



Hand Placement

Place the **heel of your hands** in the center of the chest on the sternum. Your hands **may contact breast tissue** when performing CPR on a woman, but this is normal and appropriate.



Chest Exposure

Remove clothing and bras, especially those with metal underwires, as they can interfere with AED pad placement, conduct electricity, and cause burns, and disrupt compressions; use the **trauma shears in the AED kit** to quickly cut away clothing.



AED Pad Placement

Place one pad on the **upper right chest** (above the breast) and the other on the **lower left side** (below the breast), lifting breast tissue as needed to ensure proper contact with the electrodes.

Other Resources:



AHA Hands-only
CPR tutorial on
men and women



Study of Gender-
Based Gaps in
Bystander CPR

*We recognize the expansive and diverse ways people identify with gender, and understand that medical science is limited in this understanding. When this brochure says "women," we are referring to people assigned female at birth.

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**A student-led effort to
improve CPR awareness
and response for women
through education and
community outreach.**



Don't Hesitate; Resuscitate

A guide to performing CPR on
women and pregnant patients



**Women are 14-27% less likely to
receive bystander CPR than men.
Be the difference.**

CPR Equity Initiative

Common Myths

Myth 1: "I'll touch something I shouldn't"

Truth: The compression point is the sternum, the center of the chest. Your hands are on bone, not breast tissue. Saving her life is always appropriate.

Myth 2: "It's too awkward/embarrassing to do CPR on a woman in public"

Truth: That embarrassment is literally costing women their lives. Women are 27% less likely to receive bystander CPR in public than men.

Myth 3: "She doesn't look like she's having a heart attack"

Truth: Women's cardiac symptoms often don't match the "classic" Hollywood heart attack, which is why your signs section on page 2 exists.

Myth 4: "Only medical professionals should do CPR on women"

Truth: First responders take 8 to 12 minutes on average. Brain death starts at 4 to 6 minutes. Bystanders are the real first line of defense.

Signs of Cardiac Events in Women: Differences that Matter

- 1 Chest pain, pressure, or tightness
- 2 Sweating (cold sweat)
- 3 Pain spreading to the arm (often left)
- 4 Shortness of breath

Unique symptoms to look out for in women:

- 1 Lightheadedness or dizziness
- 2 Pain in the jaw, neck, or upper back
- 3 Unusual or extreme fatigue
- 4 Indigestion or "heartburn - like" feeling
- 5 Nausea or Vomiting

CPR for Pregnant Patients



Number of Patients

Because the patient is pregnant, it is important to keep in mind that there are **two lives** depending on the **circulation you provide** via chest compressions.



Body Positioning

Slightly **elevate** the patient's **right hip** by 3-4 inches using a towel or other clothing to **relieve compression** of major blood vessels, allowing baby to receive proper circulation.



Hand Placement

Place two-interlocked hands **slightly higher** on the patient's sternum to avoid pressing on the patient's abdomen. Continue compressions as normal.

Continue CPR as normal with a rate of 100-120 bpm. AED pad placement also remains the same.