



MEDIA RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February is Heart Month with St. John Ambulance – Keep the Beat Alive!

January 30, 2009 Ottawa, Canada - While it may not be possible to “die from a broken heart” as written in so many novels, the fact remains that heart disease kills between 35,000 and 45,000 Canadians each year. While prevention certainly plays a key role in helping to reduce mortality including lifestyle modifications such as diet, exercise, and smoking cessation, sudden cardiac arrest remains a harsh reality.

“We all should be prepared to deal with this life-threatening situation,” says Les Johnson, Director of Training, St. John Ambulance Canada. He says most cases of cardiac arrest happen at home (approx 85 per cent) and all too often cardiopulmonary resuscitation [CPR] is not being performed when professional medical help arrives.

A recent study published in the New England Journal of Medicine showed a four-fold increase in survival if CPR is started early in the cardiac arrest casualty. Sadly in Canada, only about 15 per cent of the population knows how to perform CPR.

Dr. Ian Stiell, an Ottawa emergency physician and principal CPR-researcher, says that doubling the amount of people who know CPR could save 1,000 lives annually in Canada.

Another key determinate of survival is the use of an automated external defibrillator [AED]. The easy-to-use machine delivers a measured electrical shock to an irregularly beating heart and restores the heart to a normal pumping rhythm. Early application of a defibrillator can improve survival by up to 30 per cent and when combined with immediate vigorous CPR offers the best chance of survival from cardiac arrest. For each minute that goes by without CPR, there is a 10 per cent reduction in the chance of survival.

Learning to perform CPR and using an AED is not complicated and does not require a great deal of time. In fact this could be one of the best investments you will ever make and who doesn't want a good investment these days! CPR and AED will give you the best chance to ensure that indeed you will keep the beat alive.

Keep the beat alive and register for a CPR/AED course in a location nearest you.

www.sja.ca/nl

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St. John Ambulance

SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play

www.sja.ca

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Quick Facts

- Established in 1883 in Canada
- Member of one of the world's oldest humanitarian organizations – the Order of St. John
- Serving communities across Canada – e.g. medical first response services, therapy dog services, youth services program, emergency preparedness program
- 25,000 volunteers provide two million volunteer hours annually
- 6,000 certified instructors
- Provides first aid and CPR training programs that contain the latest protocols and meet provincial and federal workplace regulations
- Trains more than 550,000 Canadians in first aid and CPR each year
- Markets a complete range of high quality first aid kits and supplies for use at work, home and play
- Supports humanitarian relief efforts across Canada and around the world



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