

Do you know how to use a Defibrillator?

by Charis Scott-Holm

Over the past few years defibrillators have been placed in prominent places such as town and village centres, schools and sports venues across the Goole area.

These defibrillators are very visible, with their brightly-coloured green packaging and recognisable heart symbol. However, many people are still unsure about which medical emergencies defibrillators should be used for, and how to use the equipment correctly.

Defibrillators are used to resuscitate victims of Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA). Someone who is having a cardiac arrest will suddenly lose consciousness and will stop breathing, or will stop breathing normally.

SCA occurs because the electrical rhythm that controls the heart is replaced by a chaotic disorganised electrical rhythm called ventricular fibrillation (VF).

The sooner VF can be treated by defibrillation, the greater the chance of successful resuscitation. Seconds count, and the ambulance service is unlikely to arrive quickly enough to resuscitate most victims.

The British Heart Foundation offers this advice: "After a cardiac arrest, every minute without CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and defibrillation reduces someone's chance of survival by 10 per cent.

"When you call 999, the operator can tell you if there's a public access defibrillator nearby. Don't delay or interrupt chest compressions to get it, send someone else.

"If you've installed a defibrillator in your community or workplace, check that your ambulance trust knows about it. That way, 999 operators can quickly identify a nearby device in future emergencies."

St John Ambulance, who offer first aid services, provides this advice on using the potentially life saving equipment: "You can use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) with no training. The machine analyses someone's heart rhythm and then uses visual or voice prompts to guide you through each step.

"First, make sure someone has called for an ambulance, and, if an AED isn't immediately available, give CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) until someone can bring you an AED.

"As soon as you've got an AED, switch it on. It will immediately start to give you a series of visual and verbal prompts informing you of what you need to do. Follow these prompts until the ambulance arrives or someone with more experience than you takes over.

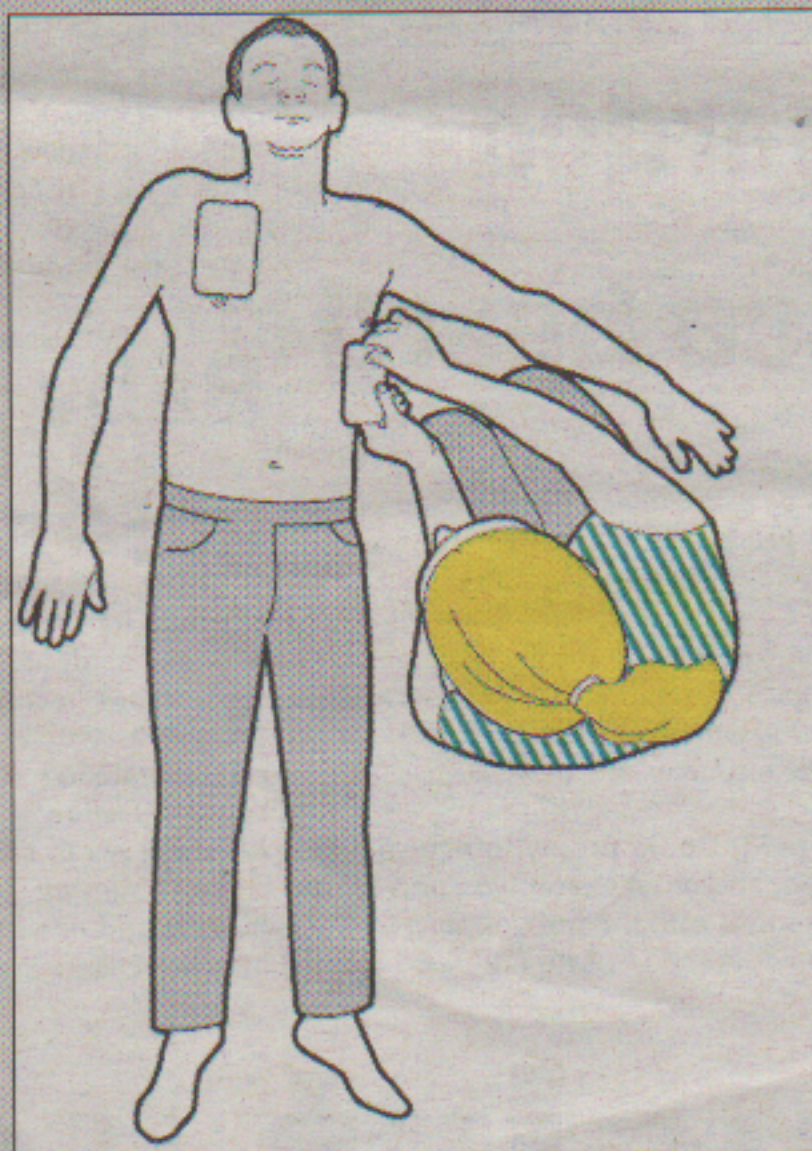
"Take the pads out of the sealed pack. Remove or cut through any clothing and wipe away any sweat from the chest.

"Remove the backing paper and attach the pads to their chest. Place the first pad on their upper right side, just below their collarbone as shown on the pad.

"Then place the second pad on their left side, just below the armpit. Make sure you position the pad lengthways, with the long side in line with the length of the their body.

"Once you've done this, the AED will start checking the heart rhythm. Make sure that no-one is touching the person. Continue to follow the voice and/or visual prompts that the machine gives you until help arrives."

Anyone who would like more help and advice with using defibrillators can read more at <http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/first-aid-advice/first-aid-techniques/using-a-defibrillator-aed.aspx> and <https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/nation-of-lifesavers/using-defibrillators>.



Where to place the pads on an adult. (30-07-02 SU)



Where to place the pads on a child. (30-07-03 SU)



Where to place the pads on a baby. (30-07-04 SU)

Locations of some of the defibrillators available locally:
Goole - Junction, West Park, Victoria Pleasure Ground, Rock Fitness. Airmyn, Snaith, Pollington, Rawcliffe Bridge, Rawcliffe, Ousefleet, Hook, Eastrington, Howden, West Cowick, Bubwith, Brighton, Holme on Spalding Moor, Drax, as well as Read School, Howden School and Goole High School.