

Lake Minnetonka Heart Safe Initiative

Each year, over 326,000 out of hospital cardiac arrests occur in the United States. According to the American Heart Association, 90 percent of people who suffer an out of hospital cardiac arrest die. CPR can double or even triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival. The sad thing is that 70 percent of Americans feel helpless to act during a cardiac emergency because they don't know how to administer CPR.

I have been a licensed EMT since 1987 and a licensed Police Officer since 1994. Over the course of nearly three decades, I have responded to dozens of cardiac arrest calls. There is no doubt that time is critical in the case of cardiac arrest. With cardiac arrest, seconds really do matter. Early intervention is absolutely essential to the survival of a cardiac arrest victim.

We are very fortunate to have an excellent emergency response system in our community. We have a layered response system which includes police, fire, and EMS. We all work together to provide the very best and fastest emergency care possible. In most cases, police are the first to arrive at a medical emergency. For this reason, all of our Police Officers and Community Service Officers are either licensed First Responders or EMT's. We also carry a wide variety of first aid equipment including, oxygen and defibrillators.

Despite having an excellent emergency response system, we have to acknowledge that it takes time for emergency personnel to arrive. Even with an excellent emergency response system, there are many factors that can affect response time such as weather, road conditions, call volume, time of day, traffic, etc. Because seconds count when dealing with a cardiac arrest, it is vital that the public do what they can to help until emergency personnel can arrive.

The key to significantly increasing the survival rate for cardiac arrest victims is:

- Early access to 9-1-1
- Early CPR
- Early defibrillation
- Early advanced care (this is when emergency personnel arrive)

As you can see above, there is much that can be done before emergency personnel arrive. Early intervention by the public is vital to increasing the survival rate of those suffering from cardiac arrest.

In an ongoing effort to achieve this goal, the Minnetrista Public Safety Department along with several other lake area communities are partnering with the Lake Minnetonka Heart Safe Community Initiative. This initiative is aimed at addressing early intervention by the public through awareness, training and equipment. Together, we can all make a difference and save more lives by significantly increasing the survival rates for cardiac arrest victims in our community.

If you are interested in learning more about the Lake Minnetonka Heart Safe Initiative or want to receive this free training so you can make a difference, contact the Minnetrista Public Safety Department at 952-446-1131.

Thank you for your commitment to public safety.

Paul A. Falls
Director of Public Safety