

Peel paramedics urge residents to learn hands-only CPR

The push is on to increase Peel's bystander Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) rate, which has been hovering around the 31 per cent mark for the last few years.

As part of CPR month in November, Peel paramedics want residents to learn hands-only CPR and start doing it right away if someone around them has a cardiac arrest or a stopping of the heart.

"When it comes to improving cardiac arrest survival in Peel we know we need bystanders to step in and perform CPR, even hands-only CPR," commented Dr. Sheldon Cheskes, medical director of Sunnybrook Centre for Prehospital Medicine. "Good chest compressions and using an Automated External Defibrillator significantly increases someone's chances of survival."

Apart from learning the technique, there may be other factors stopping people from acting when the time is right. Research has shown that people are afraid to act for fear of being sued and/or hurting the person getting the CPR.

"Doing hands-only CPR can only help someone whose heart has actually stopped beating," Chief of Peel Regional Paramedic Services Peter Dundas observed. "And, permanent brain damage can happen within minutes when blood isn't flowing to the heart and brain, so it's important to act fast while you wait for paramedics to arrive."

Throughout November, Peel paramedics will be supporting hands-only CPR training at Cardinal Leger Catholic Secondary School in Brampton, where the Grade 12 health class will train all Grade 9s who will then be challenged to go home, teach family and tweet the results; and at the Heart and Stroke Foundation's CPR Skills and Automated External Defibrillator Awareness for South Asian Families Nov. 23 from 2 to 4 p.m. at Gateway Centre, 3450 Wolfedale Rd.

The service is also using Twitter to learn what might stop residents from learning or using hands-only CPR at twitter.com/peel_paramedics