

# idea corner

## Emergency First Aid

Tragically, a great many people die each year unnecessarily from cardiac arrest and choking. In an effort to prevent some of these premature deaths, an emergency first aid course has been offered at Pennsylvania Cooperative Extension annual in-services for professionals and EFNEP aides, and at 4-H Congress.

Certified instructors (individuals certified as Emergency Medical Technicians) for the courses were affiliated with an Emergency Medical Services Council. Course content included information on how to use the emergency medical services system, the heart and blood circulation, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and choking. Manual skills taught in the course consisted of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, cardiac compressions, and the Heimlich procedure (to treat choking victims). Each course was offered for three to four hours as one continuing education elective during conference time.

After hearing a lecture, participants were divided into small groups (5-8 people). In the small group setting, students were given individual instruction as they practiced CPR skills on a life-size mannequin.

Course evaluation consisted of: (1) a pre-course exam, (2) post-course exam, (3) instructor's observations of trainee's performance (dealing with the sequential procedures in performing basic life support), and (4) a recorder print-out tape electronically produced by the mannequin (measuring the trainee's ability to integrate the preliminary and sequential behaviors with the actual administration of the functional skills). Satisfactory performance had to be demonstrated in the

last three measures to receive the American Heart Association's "Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiac Care" certificate.

Our experience indicates a high degree of need for and interest in emergency first aid instruction. Enrollment for the workshop was high, participants were very enthusiastic, and basic concepts and skills were quickly learned. The workshop wasn't difficult to organize, and judging from our experience, similar programs would be well-received by both Extension personnel and clients. Moreover, such

programming may save the life of a colleague, an Extension client, a friend, a neighbor, a loved one—or it could be you!

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