



ANZCOR BASIC LIFE SUPPORT GUIDELINES

Basic life support 2021 what's new?

The good news is that in a detailed review of the resuscitation evidence base there are few areas that require an update or change to the guidelines.

The basic principles of BLS remain the same with the same ratios of compressions to ventilations (30:2), depth of compression (>5cm in adults, approximately 5cm in children and 4 cm in infants), and compression rate of 100 to 120/minute. The value of ventilation is reaffirmed, and ventilation should be performed whenever the rescuer is willing and able.

Recently a great deal of attention has been devoted to Basic life Support during the COVID-19 pandemic. The ANZCOR guidelines reflect low prevalence of for possible infectious agents in Australia and New Zealand. Recommendations relevant to high prevalence COVID-19 pandemic situations have been published by the National COVID-19 Clinical Evidence Taskforce (NCET). The recommendations, developed in collaboration with the Australian Resuscitation Council, include BLS guidance for members of the public who are trained first responders as well as healthcare professionals. In the presence of active community transmission of COVID-19 and mask wearing restrictions the NCET recommends assessing breathing by looking and focuses on compression-only CPR.

The evidence basis for BLS guidelines has been brought up-to-date following recent ILCOR evidence reviews. The wording around considering danger to the rescuer has been changed and bag valve mask ventilation has been added to the breathing guideline. It is important to still emphasise that most sudden cardiac arrests occur in the presence of family, friends or work colleagues and mouth-to-mouth ventilation should be encouraged if the rescuer is willing and able.

Hugh Grantham
Convener Basic Life Support Subcommittee