

Woolworths to roll out defibrillators across all stores nationally to treat sudden cardiac arrest

Friday, 10 May 2019: Australians will soon have access to defibrillators in all Woolworths stores across the country in the event of sudden cardiac arrest.

The supermarket has installed its first Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) in Sydney and is set to have 500 stores completed by the end of June.

Woolworths stores located in rural and regional communities, or areas where it may be hard to access a medical site, will be the first priority to have the defibrillators installed.

All Woolworths stores have a first aid responder who will be trained in operating the AED. The AED is also designed to be used by anyone, with clear step-by-step voice instructions that can guide members of the public through the process.

The Heart Foundation warmly welcomes the initiative to put AEDs in all Woolworths stores and to train its team members in how to use them.

Heart Foundation's Group CEO, Adjunct Professor, John Kelly said; "There are up to 15,000 cardiac arrests each year in Australia, and around 10,000 people die from it."

During a cardiac arrest, the heart stops. Symptoms include sudden collapse and loss of consciousness and no, or abnormal, breathing.

Professor Kelly said; "We know that for every minute without CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation) or treatment with an AED to restart the heart, your chances of surviving a cardiac arrest go down by 10 percent.

"After 10 minutes without it, there is little chance of survival at all. For people who have a cardiac arrest outside hospital, the survival rate is only 10 per cent.

"The Heart Foundation strongly encourages the placement of AEDs in all spaces where people gather in any numbers, and the training of people to use the defibrillators. We welcome this community-minded action by Woolworths."

Woolworths Managing Director, Claire Peters said; "The numbers are troubling. As a business with a presence in more than a thousand communities across the country, we want to do our bit to help save lives.

"Our first point of action is installing the defibrillators in rural and regional communities where it may be hard for locals to access hospital or medical attention immediately in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest.

"The best medical advice tells us that access to an AED early on can greatly increase the chance of survival. "AEDs are designed to be easy to use and will be available to any members of the public in the event of an emergency."

Winc, in partnership with Integrity Health & Safety, Australia's first indigenous provider of work health and safety products, is helping Woolworths become the first major retailer in Australia to order and install defibrillators on a mass scale.

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