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AED buyer's guide

What is an AED?

An **AED** or **Automated External Defibrillator** is a life saving device which gives anyone, trained or untrained, the ability to deliver a life saving shock of electricity to a victim of cardiac arrest (where the heart is in an abnormal rhythm/electrical chaos) restoring the hearts normal rhythm.

Previously this was the role of healthcare professionals, Paramedics, Nurses and Doctors but not anymore.

These incredibly popular machines can now be found across the UK in local communities, train stations, swimming pools, gyms, private homes, offices, airports, schools, shopping centres and sports stadiums.

Why buy from defibshop.co.uk?

defibshop.co.uk is the largest online supplier of defibrillators in the UK.

We are the only company in the UK which stocks and sells defibrillators, electrode pads, batteries, cabinets and carry cases from EVERY defibrillator manufacturer that sells their products into the UK.

This means we are the ONLY Company which can give you completely honest and impartial advice on which defibrillator meets you or your companies needs and budget.

defibshop.co.uk is the only company with its own team of experienced first aid trainers who will come to your premises and teach your staff on a training defibrillator how to use your defibrillator, safely, promptly and effectively, exactly the same as the clinical defibrillator you own.

We do not offer generic training, that's the defibshop.co.uk guarantee of fun, relevant and practical training offered by no other training company in the UK.

Common features to all AEDs

AED's come with a variety of features, some common to all, other features are unique to a specific model or manufacturer. Deciding which features meet your needs will ensure you buy the AED that's right for your company.

Ease of Use

All AED's are designed to be easy to use, even by untrained personnel. This is achieved through voice and visual prompts which lead the user through the rescue process.
All the AED's we sell are very simple to use.

Reliability

We hope that you will never need to use your AED! Which means it will possibly be in a cabinet or first aid room for a long period of time before it may need to be used. It's important then, that you can have the confidence this device will work when it's needed. To achieve that, the AED will perform regular self checks of circuitry and battery levels (daily, weekly, monthly dependent on the model) If a problem was to arise the AED would inform you via an audible alarm and / or flashing indicator.
There is no supporting evidence to suggest any one AED saves more lives than another.

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Buying Tips

A defibrillator is a very important purchasing consideration.

At **defibshop.co.uk** we recommend you:

- **Purchase an AED which your rescuers will be comfortable using**
- **Purchase an AED model that you can afford**
- **Consider the long term cost of ownership including the cost of replacement batteries and electrode pads.**

You may also need to consider optional items which will ensure you have an effective AED program.

Warranty

All the AED's we sell come with either a 5 or 7 year manufacturers warranty giving you total peace of mind with your investment.

Biphasic Waveform

All the AED's we sell deliver a biphasic shock which has been demonstrated to be more effective than a monophasic shock.

Unique AED features

Colour, Size and Weight

AED's are designed to look non-clinical, non-threatening and visually appealing to the user. AED's are compact enough to be placed alongside first aid kits or in rescue bags and so are lightweight and portable, some have inbuilt carry handles whilst others require snug fitting carry bags.

Shock Levels: Fixed Energy V Escalating Energy

As mentioned previously all the AED's we sell deliver a biphasic shock, however, AED's deliver this life saving shock differently by using different energy levels.

Some have fixed energy levels meaning the first and subsequent shocks will be delivered at the same energy level, typically 150 joules of energy.

Others deliver escalating energy levels, the first shock maybe delivered at 150 joules and any subsequent shocks will be delivered at higher energy levels typically 200 joules for the second shock and 300 joules for the third and remaining shocks.

All manufacturers claim their method of delivery is the most effective but there is no definitive research currently available to suggest one is better than the other.

Battery Life

Battery life is a very important consideration when buying an AED, whichever AED you choose to buy, you can expect to replace the battery at least once during its life, even if the AED is never used. This could have a significant impact on the total cost of AED ownership over a 5 – 7 year period.

Rechargeable batteries

Rechargeable batteries are available to a few, certainly not all of the AED's we sell. These AED's are more professional units with additional features such as ECG screens and manual override capability.

These units would be used on a regular basis by healthcare professionals and so would require rechargeable batteries to ensure full battery levels and to help reduce the cost of ownership.

Electrode Self Test

All AED's perform self tests on internal circuitry and battery levels and will alert the user of any problems. Only some units check that the electrode pads are connected to the AED and currently only Cardiac Science AED's check the integrity of the gel on those pads so you can be 100% sure that every element of their AED will work every time.

Voice Prompts

All AED's use a series of voice prompts to guide the user through the rescue process. Where AED's differ is in what and how much detail they provide to guide the user.

Some units are very specific in their vocal coaching, especially when it comes to the CPR element of the rescue, this is ideal for an untrained / infrequent user.

Other units will go quiet during this process only offering information such as elapsed time to next analysis. Many healthcare professionals prefer this approach as they practice their skills often and may not need or desire additional voice prompts.

Some units even allow you to choose either option by simply pressing a button on the unit and so will suit all users' preferences / needs.

You may also need to consider optional items which will ensure you have an effective AED program.

Training

If you make only one other optional purchase then it has to be effective training, there seems little point investing in a life saving AED if the people you expect to use it have no training, confidence or experience of the AED and its unique features, the whole rescue process or effective CPR skills.

At defibshop.co.uk we offer the most comprehensive AED user course available which exceeds current UK Resuscitation Council guidelines and will ensure your rescuers have the skills and confidence to make a difference should the AED ever need to used.

Spare Electrodes / Paediatric pads

All electrode pads are single use only, so it makes sense to have a spare pair just in case one pair is compromised during a rescue.

Although it is rare for cardiac arrest to occur in children, it happens. All AED's have the capability to offer a life saving shock to both adults and children, but they need to be able to reduce the energy level to suit the smaller frame of a child.

This is done via special paediatric electrode pads. If you have children that frequent your premises you may wish to consider purchasing a set of paediatric electrode pads.

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At defibshop.co.uk we have video downloads for you to experience every defibrillator before you choose to buy.

Visual Prompts

Current guidance from the UK Resuscitation Council states that AED users should follow the voice and visual prompts of the AED they are using.

Similar to voice prompts the manufacturers have taken different routes to visually display guidance to the rescuer.

Some units opt for a simple LCD text solution, displaying elapsed time, number of shocks and a CPR countdown. Others have gone to the other end of the spectrum and their AED's display pictorially the full rescue sequence which is to be followed.

As with voice prompts you need to decide who will be using the unit and how much prompting / guidance those users may need from the AED.

Future: In development are full colour LCD screens with video prompts to guide the rescuer through the entire process - we can't wait for these to be launched in 2010!

ECG Display

ECG displays are useful for medical professionals trained to interpret the results. ECG displays are available on our more expensive professional level AED's.

They are an unnecessary feature and expense for lay responders and may even be a distraction during a rescue.

Accessories

AED's come with various extras, when choosing your AED expect to pay for the unit itself, this will include the battery and at least one set of adult electrode pads.

In addition to this, some units come supplied with an additional set of adult electrode pads, maybe a carry case or even an extra battery.

When comparing AEDs you need to look at everything each unit comes with to assess its real value.

How to Order

For detailed information, downloads, videos and to buy defibrillators, accessories and training we supply visit our fantastic website **www.defibshop.co.uk** or call us for free, impartial advice on **0845 071 0830**

Secure Shopping
By phone, fax, email or on the web: your order is guaranteed safe and secure
We accept all major credit cards or can issue you with an invoice for your accounts department

Pre approved NHS and Government Purchase Orders
Fax or email your government or NHS purchase order for immediate dispatch

Absolute privacy
We are Data Protection Registered and never sell or pass on your details to any third party

Spare Battery

We are all familiar with electronic devices which rely on batteries, and also the fact that these batteries have a habit of expiring just when we need them.

The primary source of failure in all electronic devices is battery failure.

An AED is an electronic device (battery failure would be rare as each unit has an alarm) good practice would suggest having a spare battery on hand.

Carry Case

Protect you investment with a soft or hard carry case if it isn't supplied with one. These cases are useful for carrying other items required during a rescue such as gloves, pocket masks, towels, scissors, razors or spare electrode pads.

Wall Cabinet

Protect your investment from dust and moisture but also make your AED highly visible to everyone who made need to find it during a rescue.

Cabinets come in various options including metal or plastic, with or without audible alarms and strobe light alarms.

Alarms may help signal a rescue is in progress and will also deter theft.

Walls Signs

Identify the location of your AED to everyone

Finance Options

Consider splitting the cost of your defibrillator and extras over several years and you may gain valuable tax advantages in addition to retaining company capital and without affecting cash flow.

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