

Priority Topic: **ADVANCED CARDIAC LIFE SUPPORT**

Key Features:

You will all take the ACLS Course during your training. The best resource for ACLS is the 2015 ACLS book by the AHA, or the **NEW web-based integrated guidelines**

1. **Keep up to date** with advanced cardiac life support (ACLS) recommendations (i.e., maintain your knowledge base).

✓ **Recertify ACLS every 2 years and keep updated on new guidelines (q5 yrs)**
2. Promptly **defibrillate** a patient with ventricular fibrillation (**V fib**), or pulseless or symptomatic ventricular tachycardia (**V tach**).

What you should study:

- ✓ **Cardiac Arrest Algorithm 2015**
3. **Diagnose serious arrhythmias** (V tach, V fib, supraventricular tachycardia, atrial fibrillation, or second- or third-degree heart block), **and treat according to ACLS protocols**.

What you should study:

- ✓ **ACLS Rhythms for ACLS Algorithms Appendix 3**
- ✓ **Tachycardia with a pulse Algorithm 2015**
- ✓ **Bradycardia with a pulse Algorithm 2015**

4. Suspect and promptly treat reversible causes of arrhythmias (e.g., hyperkalemia, digoxin toxicity, cocaine intoxication) before confirmation of the diagnosis.

What you should study:

- ✓ H's and T's

5. Ensure adequate ventilation (i.e., with a bag valve mask), and secure the airway in a timely manner.

What you should study:

- ✓ ACLS Provider Manual Supplement 2016 – see section on Airway

6. In patients requiring resuscitation, assess their circumstances (e.g., asystole, long code times, poor pre-code prognosis, living wills) to help you decide when to stop. (Avoid inappropriate resuscitation.)

7. In patients with serious medical problems or end-stage disease, discuss code status and end-of-life decisions (e.g., resuscitation, feeding tubes, levels of treatment), and readdress these issues periodically.

What you should study:

- ✓ End-of-Life Treatment Preferences AAFP 2005
- ✓ Advance Directives AAFP 2012

8. Attend to family members (e.g., with counselling, presence in the code room) during and after resuscitating a patient.

9. In a **pediatric resuscitation**, use appropriate resources (e.g., Braeslow tape, the patient's weight) to **determine the correct drug doses and tube sizes**.

What you should study:

- ✓ Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)
- ✓ Web-based Pediatric ALS online AHA

Note: Shock is not dealt with in this topic.

**** you will find it in Priority Topic: Trauma**