

Saving a life easier, faster

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

You will be able to learn and apply life-saving CPR easier and faster following the launch of new emergency care guidelines and a soon-to-be released DVD.

CPR, or cardiopulmonary resuscitation, is a technique to re-start a heart during cardiac arrest. In the past, the method called for the responder to apply 15 compressions, or downward thrusts, on the victim's chest for every two rescue breaths.

The recommended ratio is now 30 compressions, applied harder and faster, between two breaths, Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada spokesperson Elissa Freeman said.

The 2005 Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care, launched this week by the foundation, suggests the

enhanced CPR methods create more blood flow through the heart to the body and buys a few critical minutes until emergency crews arrive.

Touted as the most significant change since CPR's inception in the 1960s, the latest instruction does away with a pulse check and advises the responder to press on the victim's chest with 30 quick, deep pushes between two breaths to inflate the lungs.

"Push hard and push fast," Ms Freeman, a Thornhill resident, said. "Research proves these compressions create more blood flow. It buys more time until EMS and defibrillation gets there."

The new guidelines also suggest responders compress the victim's chest between 1.5 and two inches minimum.

"When you're in cardiac arrest, you're essentially dead," she said. "Don't worry about cracking a rib."

CPR is an integral link in the chain of survival, Ms Freeman said.

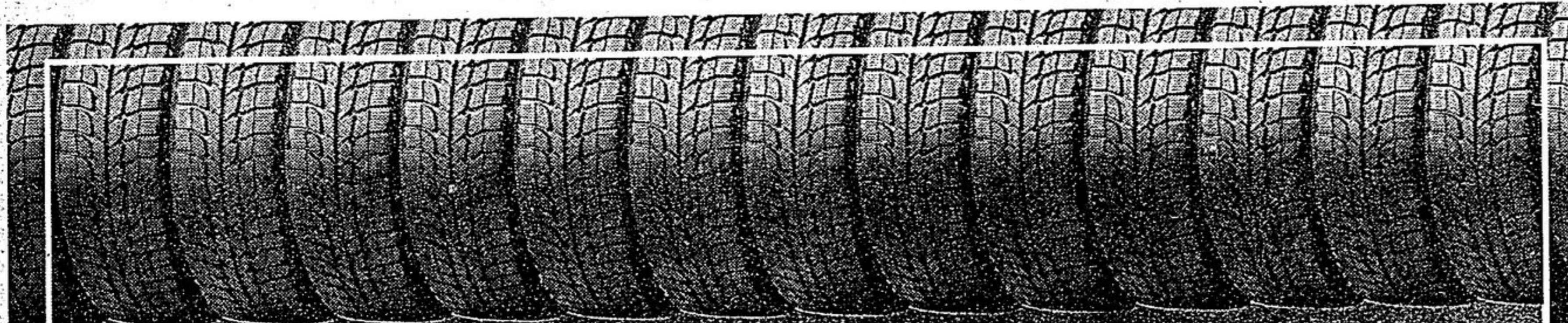
"Calling 9-1-1, CPR, EMS and defibrillation (a controlled electrical shock to the heart) is the best chance for survival," she said.

Between 35,000 and 45,000 Canadians suffer cardiac arrest annually and less than 5 per cent survive, she noted.

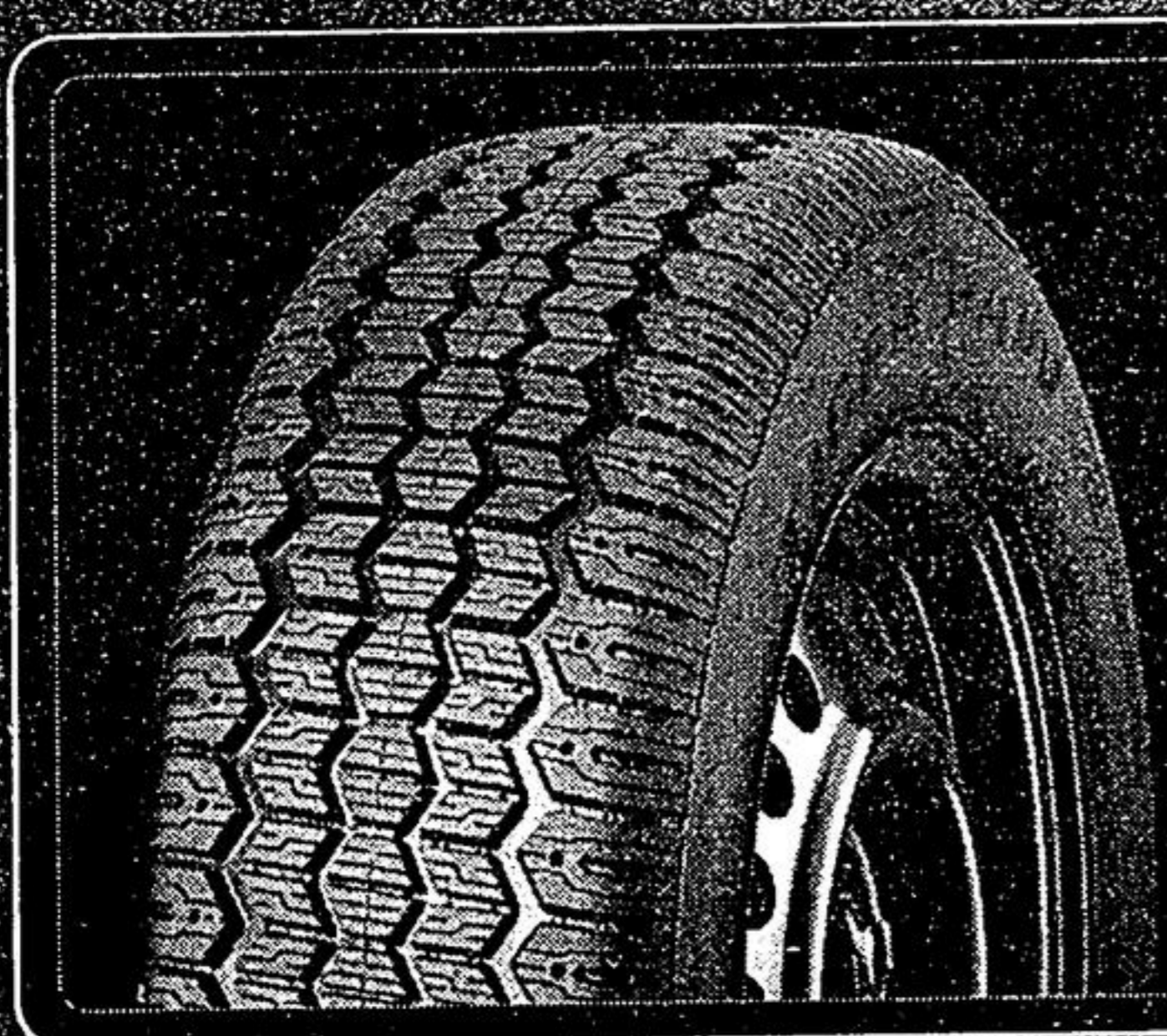
Eighty per cent of cardiac arrests happen in the home. CPR and defibrillation within three minutes can increase survival rates up to 74 per cent.

The foundation provides CPR training for more than 300,000 Canadian each year. Finding time to learn the technique is the main complaint for those who are untrained.

For information, call the foundation, 1-888-475-4636; in Newmarket, 905-853-6355; in Richmond Hill, 905-709-4899 or check out www.heartandstroke.ca



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