

First Aid

English Wikibooks

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Contents

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Authors	1
1.2	Licensing	1
1.3	How to read this book	1
1.3.1	Internationally-recognized standards	1
1.4	What is First Aid?	2
1.4.1	Guiding principles	2
1.4.2	Limitations	2
1.5	First Aid Training	2
1.5.1	First Aid Training	2
1.5.2	Professional Levels Beyond First Aid	3
2	Issues in Providing Care	5
2.1	Consent	5
2.1.1	Importance	5
2.1.2	Gaining consent	5
2.1.3	Other influences of consent	6
2.2	Protective Precautions	7
2.2.1	Awareness of Danger	7
2.2.2	Barrier Devices	7
2.3	Legal Liability	9
2.3.1	Good Samaritan Laws	9
2.4	Critical Incident Stress & Victim Death	10
2.5	Abuse & Neglect	10
3	Primary Assessment & Basic Life Support	13
3.1	Scene Survey	13
3.1.1	Scene Survey	13
3.1.2	Responsiveness	14
3.1.3	Summary	15
3.1.4	Calling For Help	15
3.1.5	Treatment	16
3.2	A for Airway	16
3.3	B for Breathing	17

3.3.1	Principles	17
3.3.2	Checking for breathing	17
3.4	C for Compressions	18
3.4.1	Principles	18
3.4.2	Technique	18
3.4.3	Making compressions effective	19
3.4.4	When to Stop	19
3.4.5	Obstructed Airway	20
3.5	Summary of CPR	20
3.5.1	Area - check the area	21
3.5.2	Awake - check level of consciousness	21
3.5.3	Ambulance - call EMS	21
3.5.4	Airway - open the airway	21
3.5.5	Breathing - check for breathing	21
3.5.6	Compressions - begin compressions	21
3.6	D for Deadly Bleeding	22
3.6.1	Assessment	22
3.6.2	Treatment	22
4	Secondary Assessment	23
4.1	Head-to-toe	23
4.1.1	Who is this for?	23
4.1.2	Priority of ABCs	24
4.1.3	What is being looked for?	24
4.1.4	The six areas	24
4.2	History	26
4.2.1	Chief Complaint	26
4.2.2	History of Chief Complaint	26
4.2.3	Allergies	26
4.2.4	Medical History & Medications	26
4.2.5	Pain Assessment	27
4.2.6	Important Information	27
4.2.7	Onset	27
4.2.8	Next of Kin	27
4.3	Vitals	27
4.3.1	Purpose	27
4.3.2	Assessments	27
5	Circulatory Emergencies	31
5.1	External Bleeding	31
5.1.1	Introduction	31
5.1.2	Recognition	31
5.1.3	Treatment	32
5.1.4	Dressing	33
5.1.5	Special cases	33
5.2	Internal Bleeding	34

5.2.1	Introduction	34
5.2.2	Causes	35
5.2.3	Recognition	35
5.2.4	Treatment	36
5.3	Heart Attack & Angina	36
5.3.1	Introduction	36
5.3.2	Recognition	36
5.3.3	Treatment	37
5.4	Stroke & TIA	37
5.4.1	Recognition	38
5.4.2	Treatment	38
6	Respiratory Emergencies	39
6.1	Anaphylaxis	39
6.1.1	Introduction	39
6.1.2	Recognition	39
6.1.3	Treatment	39
6.2	Asthma & Hyperventilation	40
6.2.1	Recognition	40
6.2.2	Treatment	41
6.3	Obstructed Airway	41
6.3.1	Conscious Victims	41
6.3.2	Unconscious Victims	42
7	Soft Tissue Injuries	43
7.1	Burns	43
7.1.1	Recognition	43
7.1.2	Treatment	43
7.2	Electrocution	44
7.2.1	Treatment	44
7.3	Chest & Abdominal Wounds	45
7.3.1	Closed Chest Wounds	45
7.3.2	Open Chest Wounds	46
7.3.3	Abdominal Injuries	47
8	Bone & Joint Injuries	49
8.1	Fractures	49
8.1.1	Introduction	49
8.1.2	Recognition	49
8.1.3	Treatment	49
8.1.4	Femoral fractures	51
8.2	Sprains, & Strains	51
8.2.1	Sprain or Fracture?	51
8.2.2	Treatment	52
8.3	Head & Facial Injuries	52
8.3.1	Head Injuries	52

8.3.2	Injuries involving the eye	54
8.4	Suspected Spinal Injuries	55
8.4.1	Recognition	55
8.4.2	Treatment	56
9	Environmental Illness & Injury	57
9.1	Heat Illness & Injury	57
9.1.1	Heat Cramps	57
9.1.2	Heat Exhaustion	57
9.1.3	Heat Stroke	58
9.2	Cold Illness & Injury	59
9.2.1	Frostbite	59
9.2.2	Hypothermia	60
9.3	Pressure-Related Illness & Injury	61
9.3.1	Treatment	61
9.3.2	Decompression Sickness (the Bends)	61
9.3.3	Oxygen Toxicity	62
9.3.4	Air Embolism	62
10	Medical Conditions	65
10.1	Diabetes	65
10.1.1	Hypoglycemia (Insulin Shock)	65
10.1.2	Hyperglycemia	66
10.2	Seizure	67
10.2.1	Recognition	67
10.2.2	Treatment	68
10.3	Poisoning	68
10.3.1	Absorption	68
10.3.2	Inhalation	69
10.3.3	Ingestion	69
10.3.4	Injection	69
11	Advanced Topics	71
11.1	Wilderness First Aid	71
11.1.1	Animal bites	71
11.2	Extended Assessment	72
11.2.1	Checking for underlying causes	72
11.2.2	Additional tests for spinal injuries	73
11.3	Airway Management	73
11.3.1	Manual methods	74
11.3.2	Oral Airways	74
11.3.3	Bag-Valve-Mask (BVM)	75
11.3.4	Suction Devices	76
11.4	Oxygen Administration	77
11.4.1	Nasal Cannula	77
11.4.2	Bag-Valve-Mask	77

11.4.3	Non-rebreathing Mask	77
11.4.4	Pocket Mask	77
11.5	Automated External Defibrillation	78
11.5.1	D for Defibrillation	78
11.5.2	Operation	79
11.6	Basic Triage	79
11.6.1	Simple Triage And Evacuation (START)	79
A	Glossary	81
B	Behind the Scenes	85
B.1	ILCOR	85
B.1.1	Mission Statement	85
B.1.2	Objectives	86
B.1.3	Activities	86
C	Resources & Further Reading	87
C.1	Print Resources	87
C.2	External links	88
C.2.1	Journals	88
C.2.2	First Aid Training Organizations	88
C.2.3	Other	88
D	Notes for First Aid Instructors	89
D.1	Education	89
E	Disclaimers	91
E.1	Disclaimers specific to First Aid	91
E.2	Use Wikibooks At Your Own Risk!	92
E.3	Wikibooks Does Not Give Medical Advice	94
E.4	Wikibooks Does Not Give Legal Opinions	94
F	GNU Free Documentation License	97
1.	APPLICABILITY AND DEFINITIONS	97
2.	VERBATIM COPYING	99
3.	COPYING IN QUANTITY	99
4.	MODIFICATIONS	100
5.	COMBINING DOCUMENTS	102
6.	COLLECTIONS OF DOCUMENTS	102
7.	AGGREGATION WITH INDEPENDENT WORKS	103
8.	TRANSLATION	103
9.	TERMINATION	103
10.	FUTURE REVISIONS OF THIS LICENSE	103
	ADDENDUM: How to use this License for your documents	104

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Authors

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1.2 Licensing

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1.3 How to read this book

1.3.1 Internationally-recognized standards

This book is a Canadian version of the original at Wikibooks. All references to protocols which do not comply with resuscitation standards in Canada have been removed. For more information on how standards are developed and implemented, see Appendix B: Behind the Scenes.

Important points are often repeated in the margin.

This book is a static version; the most current version is found at http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/First_Aid, where you can edit it. As well, all images are available through Wikibooks at full size.

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1.4 What is First Aid?

First aid is the provision of immediate care to a victim with an injury of illness, usually effected by a lay person, and performed within a limited skill range. First aid is normally performed until the injury or illness is satisfactorily dealt with (such as in the case of small cuts, minor bruises, and blisters) or until the next level of care, such as an ambulance or doctor, arrives.

1.4.1 Guiding principles

The key guiding principles and purpose of first aid, is often given in the mnemonic **3 Ps**. These three points govern all the actions undertaken by a first aider:

1. Prevent further injury
2. Preserve life
3. Promote recovery



Figure 1.1: A common first aid symbol

1.4.2 Limitations

The nature of first aid means that most people will only have a limited knowledge, and first aiders are advised to seek professional help (for instance from the ambulance service or a doctor) when they reach the limits of their knowledge.

1.5 First Aid Training

1.5.1 First Aid Training

Reading this manual is no substitute for hands-on first aid training from an instructor qualified by a recognized organization.

Training programs vary from region to region, and we will highlight some of the main programs here.

North America

1. Lifesaving Society: The LSS, Canada's lifeguarding expert, provides first aid training geared toward both lifeguards and public
2. Red Cross: The RC has been a leading first aid training organization throughout North America
3. St. John Ambulance: provides first aid courses to the public, as well as more advanced training
4. Canadian Ski Patrol: provides first aid training for their ski patrollers as well as the public
5. Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada: sets the standard for resuscitation in Canada
6. Corporate training programs: there are various corporations which provide their own programs
7. Many ambulance and fire services offer basic first aid courses to those who are interested, contact your local Emergency Services Station for more information.

1.5.2 Professional Levels Beyond First Aid

Professional pre-hospital care is provided by local or regional Emergency Medical Services. It is feasible for interested persons to undertake further training. Higher levels of training include:

1. First Responder - The first responder level is often aimed at professionals, such as police officers, although in some areas, laypersons can become first responders, designated to reach emergencies before an ambulance
2. Emergency Medical Technician - Most ambulance services worldwide qualify their staff as EMTs or an equivalent. The additional skills they have vary between services, however most cover areas such as more advanced spinal care, resuscitation and patient handling. In many countries, first aiders can attain this level of training through voluntary organizations or through private training.
3. Paramedic - Paramedics are often the most highly qualified of the ambulance personnel, usually with a range of intravenous drugs and items such as intubation kits. It is unlikely that any non-professional could achieve paramedic level.

Chapter 2

Issues in Providing Care

2.1 Consent

2.1.1 Importance

Most people and cultures involve a certain amount of respect for a person's personal space. This varies with cultural and personal attitude, but touching another person is generally considered to be rude, offensive or threatening unless their permission is gained.

As most first aid treatment does involve touching the victim, it is very important that the first aider gains their permission, so as to avoid causing offence or distress. In most jurisdictions, it may also be considered a form of assault if a first aider touches the victim without permission.

2.1.2 Gaining consent

The simplest way to gain consent is to ask the victim if they will allow you to treat them. Talk to the victim, and build up a rapport with them. During this conversation, it is important to identify the following key points:

- **Who you are:** Start with your name, and explain that you are a trained first aider
- **Why you are with them:** They are likely to know they have an injury or illness (although you can't always assume this in the case of patients in emotional shock, children or those with learning difficulties), but explain to them that you would like to help with their injury or illness
- **What you are going to do:** Some first aid procedures can be uncomfortable (such as the sting which accompanies cleaning a wound with saline), so it is important to be honest with the patient about what you are doing, and if necessary, why it is important.

Implied consent

There are some cases where you can assume that the victim gives their consent to you treating them. The key, unequivocal reason for assuming consent is if the patient:

- Is unconscious
- Has a very reduced level of consciousness

In these cases, you can perform any reasonable treatment within your level of training, and your position is protected in most jurisdictions.

Judgement of consent

There are also some cases where the first aider may have to exercise a level of judgment in treating a victim who may initially refuse. Cases like this include when the victim is:

- Intoxicated
- Irrational (i.e. delusional, insane or confused due to the injuries)
- A minor (parent or guardian must give consent if present and able; otherwise consent is implied)
- Suffering from learning difficulties

In these judgment cases, the first aider must make a decision, even if the victim is refusing treatment. If this occurs it is very important to make a note of the decision, why it was taken, and why it was believed that the person was unfit to refuse treatment. It is advisable to summon professional medical assistance if you believe the victim should be treated and is refusing, as medical professionals are experienced in dealing with people reluctant to accept treatment.

2.1.3 Other influences of consent

First aiders should always err towards treating a victim. Your actions will likely be covered by a Good Samaritan Law.

Wishes of relatives

In some cases, relatives may object to the treatment of their relative. This can be a problematic area for the first aider, with several important factors to be considered.

In the first instance, it may not be any decision of the relative to choose to consent to first aid treatment. In most countries, the only time this decision can be definitively taken is if the person requiring treatment is a child.

In other cases, the presumption for the first aider must be towards treating the victim, especially if they are unconscious.

The other main consideration is if the person claiming to refuse consent on behalf of the victim is in fact a relative, or if they have the victim's best interests at heart. In some cases, the person may have caused harm to the victim. If in this case, you fear for your safety, or the person becomes aggressive, you should look after your own safety as a priority, and call for assistance from the police.

Advance directive

Some victims may have a statement recorded, called an advanced directive or living will, that they do not wish to be treated in the case of life threatening illness. This can be recorded on a piece of paper, or on wearable items such as a bracelet.

The legal force of these items may vary widely between countries. However, in the majority of cases they should follow a certain format, and be counter-signed by a solicitor or notary public.

2.2 Protective Precautions

2.2.1 Awareness of Danger

The first thing that any first aider should be aware of when entering a situation is the potential for danger to themselves. This is especially important in first aid, as situations which are dangerous are the most likely to produce casualties who require first aid.

Danger can consist of:

- **Environmental danger** - A danger in the surroundings, such as falling masonry, broken glass, fast vehicles or chemicals.
- **Human danger** - Danger from people at the scene (including the victim) which can be intentional or accidental.

2.2.2 Barrier Devices

Keeping yourself protected is the first priority of any first aider. The key skill for this is awareness of your surroundings and the changing situation.

Once you are aware of the hazards, you can then take steps to minimize the risk to oneself. One of the key dangers to a first aider is bodily fluids, such as blood, vomit, urine and feces, which pose a risk of cross contamination. Body fluids can carry infections and diseases, including, but not limited to, HIV and hepatitis.

Gloves

The main tool of the first aider to avoid this risk is a pair of impermeable gloves. Gloves protect the key contact point with the victim (i.e. the hands) and allow you to work in increased safety. They protect not only from bodily fluids, but from any dermatological infections or parasites that the victim may have.

THE FIRST THING A FIRST AIDER SHOULD DO WHEN APPROACHING, OR ON THEIR WAY TO, A VICTIM IS TO PUT ON THEIR GLOVES.

They are generally of three types:

- *Nitrile* - These gloves can come in any color (often purple or blue) and are completely impermeable to bodily fluids. These are the gloves most recommended for use during victim contact.
- *Latex* - Usually white gloves, often treated with talcum powder to make them easier to get on or off. These are not used as widely as they once were due to a prevalence of allergies to latex.
- *Vinyl*- Vinyl gloves are found in some kits, although they are NOT suitable for contact with body fluids. They should ONLY be used for touching victim who do not have external body fluids. For this reason, some organizations recommend they are not kept in first aid kits due to the risk of confusion.

CPR Adjunct

The other key piece of protective equipment that should be in every first aid kit is an adjunct for helping to perform safe mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

With mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, there is a high probability of bodily fluid contact, especially with regurgitated stomach contents and mouth borne infections. A suitable mask will protect the rescuer from infections the victim may carry (and to some extent, protect the victim from the rescuer). It also makes the performance of CPR less onerous (not wishing to perform mouth to mouth is a key reason cited for bystanders not attempting CPR).

CPR adjuncts come in a variety of forms, from small keyrings with a nitrile plastic shield, up to a fitted pocket mask.



Figure 2.1: A CPR pocket mask, with carrying case

Other equipment

Larger first aid kits, or those in high risk areas could contain additional equipment such as:

- *Safety glasses* - To mitigate the risk of spurting fluids entering the eyes
- *Apron or gown* - Disposable aprons are common items in larger kits, and help protect the rescuers clothing from contamination.
- *Filter breathing mask* - Some large kits, especially in high risk areas such as chemical plants, may contain breathing masks which filter out harmful chemicals or pathogens. These can be useful in normal first aid kits for dealing with victim who are suffering from communicable respiratory infections such as tuberculosis.

Improvisation

Many first aid situations take place without a first aid kit readily to hand and it may be the case that a first aider has to improvise materials and equipment. As a general rule, some help is better than no help, especially in critical situations, so a key first aid skill is the ability to adapt to the situation, and use available materials until more help arrives.

Some common improvisations include:

- Gloves ⇒ plastic bags, dish gloves, leather work gloves (wash your hands with soap and water especially well after using these)
- Gauze ⇒ clean clothing (but not paper products)
- Splints ⇒ straight sections of wood, plastic, cardboard or metal
- Slings ⇒ the victim's shirt's bottom hem pinned to the center of their chest will immobilize a forearm nicely

2.3 Legal Liability

2.3.1 Good Samaritan Laws

Good Samaritan laws in Canada are laws protect from liability those who choose to aid others who are injured or ill. They are intended to reduce bystanders' hesitation to assist, for fear of being prosecuted for unintentional injury or wrongful death. In other countries (as well as the province of Quebec), Good Samaritan laws describe a legal requirement for citizens to assist people in distress, unless doing so would put themselves in harm's way. Citizens are often required to, at minimum, call the local emergency number.

Check with your government for applicable legislation in your area. Typically, the Good Samaritan legislation does not cover an individual who exceeds their training level or scope of practice; nor would you be protected against gross negligence.

Rescuers should not be afraid of liability affecting them while performing their duties. In many cases, it is often best to provide care and to do so to the best of your ability without worry of legal implications.

General guidelines

1. Unless a caretaker relationship (such as a parent-child or doctor-patient relationship) exists prior to the illness or injury, or the "Good Samaritan" is responsible for the existence of the illness or injury, no person is required to give aid of any sort to a victim.
2. Any first aid provided must not be in exchange for any reward or financial compensation. As a result, medical professionals are typically **not** protected by Good Samaritan laws when performing first aid in connection with their employment.
3. If aid begins, the responder must not leave the scene until:

- It is necessary in order to call for needed medical assistance.
 - Somebody of equal or higher ability can take over.
 - Continuing to give aid is unsafe (this can be as simple as a lack of adequate protection against potential diseases, such as vinyl, latex, or nitrile gloves to protect against blood-borne pathogens) a rescuer can **never** be forced to put themselves in danger to aid another person.
4. The responder is not legally liable for the death, disfigurement or disability of the victim as long as the responder acted rationally, in good faith, and in accordance with their level of training.

Negligence

Negligence requires three elements to be proven:

1. **Duty of care:** You had a duty to care for the victim. Often, if you begin first aid, then a duty of care exists
2. **Standard of care was not met:** You didn't perform first aid properly, or went beyond your level of training. The standard of care is what a reasonable person with similar training would do in similar circumstances.
3. **Causation:** The damages caused were your fault. Causation requires proof that your act or omission caused the damages.

2.4 Critical Incident Stress & Victim Death

It is not uncommon for first aiders to have emotional or psychological reactions to witnessing serious incidents or injuries. These reactions are normal. Talking about these reactions with trusted peers or friends can be helpful. Sometimes psychiatric counseling is required for the individual to cope with the stress of the incident. In some areas, critical incident stress debriefing is available, although this usually is only associated with EMS, Police, Fire and lifeguards.

2.5 Abuse & Neglect

Abuse is when a person's well-being is deliberately and intentionally threatened. In some jurisdictions, if you are a health care provider then you may be obligated to report abuse or neglect that you observe. In particular, if you are in any position of authority in relation to a child, you are likely required by law to report child abuse.

If you are not under a professional duty of care, it is strongly recommended that you report any instances of suspected abuse. Stick to reporting the facts, and let the authorities determine the truth of any suspicion. Never confront the potential abuser yourself - consider your own safety.

Never confront any suspected abusers. **Never** judge whether or not a complaint is true or not. Always treat any complaint in a serious manner.

The most vulnerable groups are the young and elderly, but be aware of the potential for abuse in all people (such as abuse of a spouse of either gender).

Physical abuse abuse involving contact intended to cause pain, injury, or other physical suffering or harm.

Emotional abuse a long-term situation in which one person uses his or her power or influence to adversely affect the mental well-being of another. Emotional abuse can appear in a variety of forms, including rejection, isolation, exploitation, and terror.

Sexual abuse is defined by the forcing of undesired sexual acts by one person to another.

Neglect a category of maltreatment, when there is a failure to provide for the proper physical care needs of a dependent.

Some forms of abuse may be more obvious such as physical abuse but the rest may be concealed depending on the victim. If you notice any whip marks, burns, bruises with an unexplained origin, slap marks, bite marks, etc., you may suspect abuse.

If the person's life is in immediate danger then you should contact emergency medical services. As a first aider you are in a good position to do this without suspicion - if questioned you should state that you believe the victim requires further treatment. If possible, you should request police assistance, although not if you are in the presence of the suspected abuser.

If the person's safety is not in immediate danger, you should contact your local government department which deals with accusations of abuse, which may vary within locations by the demographics of the person being abused (child, elder, learning difficulties etc.). If in doubt, contact your local police, who should be able to signpost you to the most appropriate service.

Chapter 3

Primary Assessment & Basic Life Support

3.1 Scene Survey

3.1.1 Scene Survey

First aiders are *never* required to place themselves in a situation which might put them in danger. Remember, you cannot help a victim if you become a victim yourself.

When a first aider is called upon to deal with a victim, they must always remember to safeguard themselves in the first instance and then assess the situation. Only after these steps are completed can treatment of the victim begin.

When called to a scene, remember that personal safety is paramount. Before you enter a scene, put on personal protective equipment, especially impermeable gloves.

As you approach a scene, you need to be aware of the dangers which might be posed to you as a first aider, or to the victim. These can include obviously dangerous factors such as traffic, gas or chemical leaks, live electrical items, buildings on fire or falling objects. Whilst many courses may focus on obvious dangers such as these, it is important not to neglect everyday factors which could be a danger. (ex. Gas fires, where in getting close to a victim could result in burns from the heated vapor)

There are also human factors, such as bystanders in the way, victim not being co-operative, or an aggressor in the vicinity who may have inflicted the injuries on the victim. If these factors are present, have the police called to control the situation.

Always remember the big **D** for Danger.

Once you have made your first assessment for danger, you should continue to be aware of changes to the situation or environment throughout your time

with the victim.

If there are dangers which you cannot mitigate by your actions (such as falling masonry), then **STAY CLEAR** and call the emergency services. Remember to **never put yourself in harm's way**.

What has happened?

As you approach, try to gain as much information as possible about the incident. Try and build a mental picture to try and help you treat the victim.

Assess the *Scene* - Where are you? What stores, clubs, public buildings, etc. are nearby? Has anything here caused the injury? What time of day is it?

Get some *History* - If there are witnesses, ask them what's happened "Did you see what happened here?" and gain information about how long ago it happened "How long have they been like this?", but start your assessment and treatment of the victim while you are doing this.

Be sure to *Listen* - Whilst working on a victim you may overhear information from witnesses in the crowd. An example of this would be an old man falling on the sidewalk, as you approach the scene you can hear someone say "He was just walking and his legs went out from under him." But you may not see the person saying this. Everything should be taken into account should no witnesses want to become involved or you cannot ask questions. Note what is said and continue treatment.

3.1.2 Responsiveness

Once you are confident that there is minimal danger to yourself in the situation, the next key factor is to assess how responsive the victim is.

This can be started with an initial responsiveness check as you approach the victim. This is best as a form of greeting and question, such as: "Hello, are you alright?"

The best response to this would be a victim looking at you and replying. This means that the victim is **Alert**.

Victims can be quickly assessed and prioritized on the **AVPU** scale, and this will help make decisions about their care. The scale stands for **Alert**, **Voice**, **Pain**, and **Unresponsive**.

If the victim looks at you spontaneously, can communicate (even if it doesn't make sense) and seems to have control of their body, they can be termed **Alert**.

Key indicators on the victim are their:

- *Eyes* - Are they open spontaneously? Are they looking around? Do they appear to be able to see you?
- *Response to voice* - Do they reply? Do they seem to understand? Can they obey commands, such as "Open your eyes"?

If the victim is not alert, but you can get them to open their eyes, or obey a command by talking to them, then you can say that they are responsive to **Voice**.

If a victim does not respond to your initial greeting and question, you will need to try and get a response to pain from them. There are three key methods of doing this, and trainers will advocate different methods, so please seek the advice of your trainer:

- *Sternal rub* - This involves digging your knuckle in to the sternum, or breastbone, of the victim (between the nipples).
- *Nail bed squeeze*- Using the flat edge of a pen or similar object, squeeze in to the bottom of the victim's fingernail (hard).
- *Ear lobe squeeze*- using thumb and forefinger, squeeze the victim's ear hard.

If any of these provoke a reaction (groaning, a movement, fluttering of the eyes), then they are responsive to pain.

Any of the responses A, V or P, mean that the victim has some level of consciousness. If they are not alert, you must immediately summon professional help.

If they do not respond to voice or pain, then they are **Unresponsive** and you must urgently perform further checks on their key life critical systems of Airway, Breathing and Circulation (ABCs).

As soon as you recognize that a victim is unconscious, call EMS. Regardless of whether they are breathing or not, you will require professional assistance. The sooner EMS is *en-route*, the better.

3.1.3 Summary

To this stage the first aider, on approaching a victim should have:

1. **G**O - Put their gloves on
2. **D** - Checked for danger
3. **R** - Checked for responsiveness
4. **S** - Looked at the scene for clues about what has happened
5. **H** - Gained history on the incident
6. **AVPU** - Assessed to see how responsive the victim is.

This can be remembered as the mnemonic **Go DR SHAVPU**.

3.1.4 Calling For Help

If the victim is unresponsive, and someone has not already summoned help, do so now. Get someone else to call if possible. If you're alone with an adult, make the call yourself: call 911.

If you're alone with a child or infant, continue care; you'll wait to call an ambulance. If you're not alone, however, have a bystander call immediately.

At the same time, try to obtain an AED and AED-trained responder if possible.

You will need to give the emergency services:

1. Your exact location
2. Nature of the incident
3. Services you require
4. A telephone number you can be contacted back on (for instance, if they have difficulty finding you)

In some cases, they will run through a list of questions with you, in order to help prioritize your call properly. They may also ask the name and details of the caller.

Sometimes, the victim must be left alone while the first aider leaves to seek help for them. If the victim is unconscious they should be left in the recovery position so that they do not aspirate if they should vomit while left unattended. If the victim potentially has a spinal or neck injury, it is *crucial* to not move the injured victim unless absolutely necessary.

3.1.5 Treatment

The last step is to actually provide care to the limits of the first aider's training - *but never beyond*. In some jurisdictions, you open yourself to liability if you attempt treatment beyond your level of training.

Treatment should always be guided by the 3Ps:

Preserve life

Prevent further injury

Promote recovery

Treatment obviously depends on the specific situation, but all victims must receive some level of treatment for shock. The level of injury determines the level of treatment for shock which is required, but all victims will require it.

The principles *first, do no harm* and *life over limb* are essential parts of the practice of first aid. Do nothing that causes unnecessary pain or further injury unless to do otherwise would result in death.

3.2 A for Airway

The airway is the entrance point of oxygen and the exit point of carbon dioxide for the body. Should this become blocked, respiratory arrest or cardiac arrest may occur.

An unconscious person's airway may be blocked when their tongue relaxes and falls across the airway. The technique used to open the airway is called the "head-tilt chin-lift" technique. The victim must be supine (lying on their back). With one hand on the forehead and the other hand under the chin, the victim's head is tilted back, and their chin lifted. The victim's jawline should be perpendicular to the ground.

Conscious victims can normally maintain an open airway; if the victim is talking or has no respiratory distress, their airway is adequate.

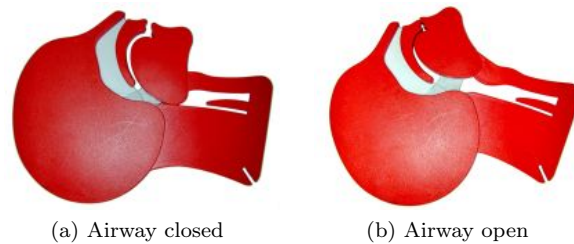


Figure 3.1: The head-tilt chin-lift is the most effective method of opening the airway.

You may also check the airway for visible, removable obstructions in the mouth, which you could remove with a finger. You can remove any item in the mouth which is removable, but should not waste time trying to remove lodged items such as dentures.

If a conscious victim's airway is obstructed by a foreign object, the object must be removed. Abdominal thrusts are the standard method for conscious victims. Refer to Obstructed Airway for unconscious procedures.

3.3 B for Breathing

3.3.1 Principles

Human respiration works by inspiring fresh air, absorbing part (but not all) of the oxygen in it, which is then distributed to the cells by the blood, and exchanging carbon dioxide. Lungs have a capacity of a dozen of liters.

When a victim stops breathing, spontaneous respiration can restart if stimulated by ventilations. However, a victim in respiratory arrest is likely to fall into *cardiorespiratory* arrest.

3.3.2 Checking for breathing

After opening the victim's airway, check for **normal** breathing. To do this, place your cheek in front of the victim's mouth (about 3 – 5cm away) while looking at their chest. Look, listen and feel for 10 seconds:

1. Look at the chest - does it rise and fall?
2. Listen for air movement
3. Feel with your cheek - is air coming from the victim's mouth or nose?

If there is no breathing or abnormal breathing, you must start CPR.

Rescue Breaths

If you have a CPR mask, use it to protect yourself and the victim from exchange of body fluids. Cheap, keyring-sized CPR masks are available in most pharmacies. Make sure you read the instructions for how to use any equipment you buy.

Start by giving two rescue breaths.

1. Maintain an open airway using the head-tilt chin-lift
2. Plug the nose of the victim with your free hand
3. Put your mouth on the mouth of the victim in an airtight manner, and blow into the mouth of the victim, do not blow forcefully as this may cause the air to enter the stomach, which will cause gastric distension; the best way to avoid this is to blow air into the mouth just enough to make the chest rise
4. Let the air exit, and give another breath

Begin compressions.

3.4 C for Compressions**3.4.1 Principles**

The purpose of doing chest compressions is to effectively squeeze the heart inside the victim's chest, causing blood to flow. This allows the normal gaseous exchange between the lungs, bloodstream and tissues to occur. Compressions are now usually performed before any rescue breaths due to the fact that when normal breathing and circulation stop, there is still a good amount of residual oxygen left in the bloodstream (as it has no way to exchange out of the body).

3.4.2 Technique

The aim is always to compress in *the center of the chest*, regardless of the victim. This means that compressions are performed on the sternum or breastbone of the victim, approximately in line with the nipples on males and children.

FOR ADULTS (>8) - place the palm of one hand in the centre of the chest, approximately between the nipple line (on adult males - for females, you may need to approximate the ideal position of this line due to variations in breast size and shape). Bring your other hand to rest on top of the first hand, and interlock your fingers. Bring your shoulders directly above your hands, keeping your arms straight. You should then push down firmly, depressing the chest to about one-third of its depth.

FOR CHILDREN (1-8) - place the palm of one hand in the centre of the chest, approximately between the nipple line. Bring your shoulder directly above your hand, with your arm straight, and perform compressions to one-third the depth of the chest.

FOR INFANTS (<1YR) - Use your forefinger and middle finger only. Place your forefinger on the centre of the child's chest between the nipples, with your middle finger immediately below it on the chest, and push downwards using the strength in your arm, compressing the chest about one-third of its depth.

Give 30 compressions in a row, and then two (2) rescue breaths - then restart your next cycle of compressions.



Figure 3.2: Compressions for infant CPR are done with two fingers.

3.4.3 Making compressions effective

You must allow the ribs to come all the way back out after each compression, followed by a brief pause. This allows the heart's chambers to refill. Spacing compressions too close together will lead to them being ineffective.

You are aiming for a rate of 100 compressions per minute, which includes the time to give rescue breaths. In practice, you should get just over 2 cycles of 30 compressions in along with breaths per minute.

Almost everyone compresses the chest too fast - Experience shows that even well trained first aiders tend to compress the heart too fast. The rate you are aiming for is only a little over one per second. The best equipped first aid kits should include a Metronome with an audible *beep* to match your speed to. Many public access defibrillators have these included in their pack.

Keep your arms straight - A lot of television and films show actors "performing CPR" bending their elbows. This is not correct - you should always keep your arms straight, with your elbows locked and directly above your hands.

It often helps to count out loud - You need to try and get 30 compressions per cycle, and it helps to count this out loud or under your breath. Performing compressions is tiring, and you may not be able to count out loud for the duration, but ensure you keep counting.

If you lose count, don't stop, just estimate - It is important to carry on once you've started, so if you lose count, don't panic, and simply estimate when 30 compressions is over, and do 2 breaths, then start over counting again.

You are likely to break ribs - When performed correctly, especially on older people, compressions are more likely than not to break ribs or the sternum itself. You should carry on regardless of this occurring. It is a sign that you are performing good, strong compressions. Oftentimes the cracking sound you will hear is just the cartilage of the ribs and sternum breaking, and not the bones themselves. If bystanders are concerned about injury to the victim, you may want to remind them of the *life over limb* principle.

3.4.4 When to Stop

You should continue giving the victim CPR until:

- *Return of Spontaneous Breathing*- The victim starts breathing for themselves. This is very unlikely with CPR only, so it should not be expected, and should be obvious if it occurs. Signs include:
 - The victim starts breathing spontaneously - This does not include gasping, called *agonal breathing*. Victims are also likely to make sighing noises or groans as you perform chest compressions - this should not be mistaken for breathing
 - The victim vomits - This is an ACTIVE mechanism, meaning the victim moves and actively vomits. Not to be confused with regurgitation, where stomach contents make their way passively in to the mouth. If the victim vomits, roll them to their side, clear the airway once they're done vomiting and reassess ABCs.
- *Qualified help arrives* and takes over. This could be a responder with a defibrillator, the ambulance service or a doctor. However DO NOT STOP until told to do so. They are likely to require time to set up their equipment, and you should continue with CPR until instructed to stop. They are likely to work around you, placing defibrillation pads on the victim's chest while you continue compressions. Continue working as normal, and let them work around you.
- *You are unable to continue* - CPR is physically very demanding, and continued periods can be exhausting. Try to change places frequently with another trained rescuer to lessen the chance of exhaustion.
- *You put yourself in danger by continuing* - Hazards may change, and if your life is endangered by a new hazard, you should stop CPR. If possible, remove the victim from the hazardous situation as well.

3.4.5 Obstructed Airway

If your ventilations don't go in, try adjusting the angle of the head (usually tilting it further back) and re-attempt ventilation. If the breath still doesn't go in, then do your compressions, and check the airway for obvious foreign obstructions after the compressions. If you see a foreign obstruction, remove it with your fingers if possible. **Do not discontinue CPR because the airway is obstructed.**

3.5 Summary of CPR

This is a summary of CPR procedure, intended as a reminder for those with previous CPR training.

3.5.1 Area - check the area

Look for hazards. If there are hazards, remove them, or remove the victim from them if possible. If not, then retreat to a safe distance, call EMS and wait for their arrival. Make sure that you do not put yourself in danger. If you are near a road, ensure that you are clearly visible to traffic.

Put on gloves if you have them.

3.5.2 Awake - check level of consciousness

Does the victim respond to voice or painful stimulus?

If YES, check the victim for other conditions and call for help if necessary.

If NO, call EMS.

3.5.3 Ambulance - call EMS

Call 911 using a bystander if possible. If you're alone, and the victim is an adult (≥ 8 years old), then leave the victim to call EMS yourself. If you're alone but the victim is a child (1-8 years old) or an infant (< 1 year old), then continue; you'll call EMS later.

Obtain an AED and AED-trained responder if possible.

3.5.4 Airway - open the airway

Quickly remove any loose and obvious obstructions from the mouth. Then tilt the head back and lift the chin so the victim's jawline is perpendicular to the ground

3.5.5 Breathing - check for breathing

Is the victim breathing?

If YES, place the victim in the Recovery position and call for help unless a spinal injury is suspected in which it is crucial to **not move the victim**. If the patient vomits, however, it is more important to roll them over to their side while holding the back, neck, and head stable.

If NO, give 2 rescue breaths and begin compressions.



3.5.6 Compressions - begin compressions

Alternate 30 chest compressions with 2 breaths. After 5 cycles (approx. 2 minutes) call EMS if you haven't done so already (in the case of children or infants). If a bystander is available, get them to call immediately upon arrival.

Figure 3.3: Correct position for CPR. The arms are fully extended and the thrusts are given from the hips.

Continue CPR until emergency help takes over, the victim moves or takes a breath, or you are too exhausted to continue. If an AED and AED-trained responder arrives on the scene, it will have priority on the over CPR. Continue CPR until the AED operator asks you to stop.

3.6 D for Deadly Bleeding

CPR without enough blood is useless, so a check for deadly bleeding should be included in your primary survey whenever possible.

If your victim is breathing, then you should continue your primary assessment with a check for deadly bleeding.

If your victim isn't breathing, then you'll be doing CPR; a bystander or second trained first aider may be able to perform this check while you continue resuscitation.

3.6.1 Assessment

With **gloved hands** check the victim's entire body for bleeding, starting with the head. Run your hands as far under the victim as possible on either sides, checking your gloves often. If your hands are bloody, then you've found bleeding. Make sure you check the head carefully; if you find an injury on the head or neck, it may indicate a spinal injury, in which case, the spine should be immobilized. As well, hair conceals blood surprisingly well - make sure you check the scalp thoroughly.

3.6.2 Treatment

If the gauze or dressing becomes saturated, *don't* take the gauze away. Apply more gauze as necessary, only professional medical personnel should remove dressings.

The key element in treating severe bleeding is the application of firm, direct pressure to the wound, using sterile gauze or other dressing. The wound may be elevated above the heart to reduce blood pressure, though this should not be done if there is a risk of disturbing fractures, or if it causes much pain to the victim.

Consider using pressure points to control major bleeding: press down on an artery proximal to the wound to keep blood from flowing to the wound. Tourniquets may also be useful in controlling massive bleeding, but is not a standard procedure and should **ONLY BE USED AS A LAST RESORT WHEN THE VICTIM WILL DIE WITHOUT IT.**

Remember that about 80% of life-threatening bleeding can be controlled adequately using direct pressure alone and the application of a tourniquet may result in the loss of the limb.

Chapter 4

Secondary Assessment

4.1 Head-to-toe

The purpose of a secondary assessment (composed of a head-to-toe, history and vitals) is to continually monitor the victims condition and find any non-life-threatening conditions requiring treatment. A secondary assessment should be done for any victim requiring ambulance intervention, or if there is a concern that the victims condition may deteriorate. In some cases, you may want to do an shortened secondary survey - use your best judgment.

4.1.1 Who is this for?

The **Head-to-toe** assessment is a technique used by lay rescuers, first responders, and ambulance personnel to identify an injury or illness or determine the extent of an injury or illness.

It is used on victims who meet the following criteria:

1. Victim of trauma injuries (except minor injuries affecting peripheral areas)
2. Unconscious victims
3. Victims with very reduced level of consciousness

If a victim is found unconscious, and no history is available, you should initially assume that the unconsciousness is caused by trauma, and where possible immobilize the spine, until you can establish an alternative cause.

The secondary assessment should be performed on all the victim meeting the criteria (especially trauma) regardless of gender of rescuer or victim. However, you should be sensitive to gender issues here (as with all aspects of first aid), and if performing a full body check on a member of the opposite sex, it is advisable to ensure there is an observer present, for your own protection. In an emergency however, victim care always takes priority.

4.1.2 Priority of ABCs

The head-to-toe should be completed after the primary survey, so you are already confident in the victim having a patent airway, breathing satisfactorily and with a circulation.

You should always make ABCs a priority when dealing with victims who are appropriate for a secondary survey. In the case of trauma victims, where the victim is conscious and able to talk, keep talking to them throughout. This not only acts to reassure them and inform them what you're doing, but will assure you that they have a patent airway and are breathing.

For unconscious victims, if you are on your own, check the ABCs between checking every body area, or if you are with another competent person, make sure they check ABCs continuously while you perform the secondary assessment.

4.1.3 What is being looked for?

The head-to-toe is a detailed examination where you should look for abnormality. This can take the form of asymmetry; deformity; bruising; point tenderness (wincing or guarding - don't necessarily expect them to tell you); minor bleeding; and medic alert bracelets, anklets, or necklaces.

It is important to remember that some people naturally have unusual body conformation, so be sensitive about this, but don't be afraid to ask the conscious victim or relatives if this is normal for them. It is always worth looking for symmetry - if it is the same both sides, the chances are, it's normal.

4.1.4 The six areas

Divide the body into 6 areas; after you examine each area, you reassess ABCs.

1. **Head and neck** - The head and neck are important areas to assess, and you should take time and care to look for any potential problems.
 - (a) **Head** - Using both hands (with gloves on), gently run your hands across the skull, pressing in gently but firmly, starting at the forehead and working around to the back of the head. Feel for indentations, look for blood or fluid and watch the victim for signs of discomfort. If it is a trauma injury, check both ears for signs of blood or fluid.
 - (b) **Neck** - The neck is an important area. Start at the sides of the neck and gently press in. Watch carefully for signs of pain. Move around until you reach the spine, moving as far down the neck as possible without moving them, if they are on their back. If there is pain, tenderness or deformity here, then you should stop the survey and immediately immobilize the neck, placing one hand each side of the head, with the thumb around the ear. This is most comfortable done from 'above' with the victim lying supine on their back, although you should support the victim in the position you find them. If there is

room, you can also lie on your front, with your elbows on the floor to support the head.

2. **Shoulders, chest and back** - This area of the body contains many of the vital organs, so it is important to look for damage which could indicate internal injury
 - (a) **Shoulders** - You should try and expose the shoulders if possible, looking for obvious deformity, especially around the collar bones. You can try pressing along the line of the collar bone, watching for deformity or pain. You should then place a hand on each shoulder, and gently push down, looking to ensure that one side does not move more than the other.
 - (b) **Chest** - The chest is ideally done exposed, although you should be aware of the sensitivity of females to this, and if you are able to keep breasts covered, it is advisable to do so. You should be looking for sections of the chest which are out of line with the rest of it, or which are moving differently to the rest of the chest whilst breathing. You should also look for obvious wounds. You can then gently press on the chest. The best way to do this is to imagine the chest divided in to four quarters running neck to stomach. You should place one hand (balled as a fist works well here, to avoid concerns over excess touching) and press down one on the left and one on the right in each quarter (avoiding breasts if applicable). You are watching for one side moving differently to the other, or for pain being caused.
 - (c) **Back** - If the victim is lying on their side, or front, you can also feel down their spine. If they are lying on their back, then skip this part of the check, and leave it for the ambulance crew.
3. **Arms and hands** - run both your hands down one arm at a time, looking for deformity or pain.
4. **Abdomen** - The abdomen contains the remainder of the body's critical organs, so should be watched for potential damage. The abdomen is mostly done by gentle pushing, using the flat of your hands. Again, use symmetry, and push both sides simultaneously. Watch for the abdomen being hard (called *guarding*) or for pain caused by the palpation.
5. **Pelvis** - The pelvis (hips) is a large bone, with potential for a fair amount of damage. The main diagnostic test is to place a hand on each hip and first push gently downwards with both hands (there should be very little movement), and then to gently rock the hips from side to side.
6. **Legs and feet** - As with arms, use both hands at the same time, running them down the inside and outside of each leg simultaneously (avoiding the groin area on the inside). You should also look for any shortening or rotation of one leg compared to the other. Finally, you take take each

foot, check that it has normal motility (can be moved normally) and has no obvious injuries

4.2 History

Taking a victim history is a crucial step. If an ambulance needs to be called and the victim is conscious, taking a history before the victim's condition worsens will assist the responding paramedics and the emergency department to better help the victim and be aware of medical conditions the victim is suffering from.

Some common things to ask for in a history are can be remembered using the acronym **CHAMPION**. Though the acronym is helpful in remembering what forms a full history, the most important thing is to get *relevant* information, not to follow a prescribed set of questions.

- C** Chief complaint
- H** History of chief complaint
- A** Allergies
- M** Medical history and medications
- P** Pain assessment
- I** Important Information
- O** Onset
- N** Next of Kin

4.2.1 Chief Complaint

What is the problem?

4.2.2 History of Chief Complaint

How did this happen? Has it ever happened before?

4.2.3 Allergies

Are you allergic to anything?

4.2.4 Medical History & Medications

Do you have any medical conditions (angina, high BP, diabetes)? Do you take any medications? Do your medications help when this happens? What is the name of your normal doctor?

4.2.5 Pain Assessment

- P Pain location
- Q Quality of pain (sharp/dull, squeezing)
- R Radiating pain?
- S Severity of pain (on a scale from 1 to 10)
- T Timing (Constant? For how long?)

4.2.6 Important Information

Name, date of birth, age, sex, address

4.2.7 Onset

When did the symptoms start? What were you doing?

4.2.8 Next of Kin

Is there anyone you would like contacted?

4.3 Vitals

4.3.1 Purpose

As part of your ongoing assessment of the victim, and in preparation for the arrival of any assistance you have called, it is important to keep a check on a victim's vital signs.

If possible, these recordings should be written down so that you can keep a record of any changes, and hand this over to the ambulance crew who take the victim from you. Ideally, it should be recorded on a report, which should form part of every first aid kit. Alternatively, you can write it on any piece of paper, or often first aiders end up writing on their protective glove.

4.3.2 Assessments

The vital signs you are looking to record relate to the body's essential functions. It starts with the airway and breathing already covered in basic life support (although you should look for additional detail) and continues with circulation, look of the skin, level of consciousness and pupil reaction.

Breathing

In addition to ensuring the victim is breathing at all times, you should count the rate of the breathing. The easiest way to do this is to count the number of breaths taken in a given time period (15 or 30 seconds are common time frames), and then multiply up to make a minute. The longer the time period, the more accurate it is, however you are likely to want the patient not to converse (as this

disrupts their breathing pattern), and it is important not to tell them that you are watching their breathing, as this is likely to make them alter the pattern, so a shorter period is likely to be more useful and reduce worry for the patient.

You should avoid telling the victim that you are measuring their breathing, as it almost always causes them to alter their breathing pattern.

In addition to rate, you should note if the breathing is heavy or shallow, and importantly if it is regular. If it is irregular, see if there is a pattern to it (such as breathing slowly, getting faster, then suddenly slower again).

Circulation

Whereas in the primary survey, we did not check the circulation of the victim to see if the heart was beating (we assumed that if the victim was breathing, their heart was working and if they were not breathing, their heart was also stopped), it is important in monitoring the breathing victim to check their circulation.

The two main checks are:

1. **Capillary Refill** - The capillaries are the smallest type of blood vessel, and are responsible for getting blood in to all the body tissues. If the blood pressure is not high enough, then not enough blood will be getting to the capillaries. It is especially important to check capillary refill if the victim has suffered an injury to one of their limbs. You check capillary refill by taking the victim's hand, lifting it above the level of the heart, and squeezing reasonably hard for about a second on the nailbed. This should move the blood out, and the nail bed will appear white. If the pink colour returns quickly (and in a healthy victim, it may return before you even move your fingers away to look!), then this is normal. Victims who have poor peripheral circulation, especially the elderly and hypothermia victims, may not demonstrate adequate capillary refill due to general lack of bloodflow, making this test less valuable on these patients. A normal time for the pink colour to return is less than two seconds. If it takes longer than two seconds for colour to return, then this could indicate a problem and you should seek medical advice.
2. **Pulse check** - As a first aider, you can also check a victim's heart rate by feeling for their pulse. There are three main places you might wish to check for a pulse:
 - (a) **Radial pulse** - This is the best pulse to look for a first aider, on a conscious victim, as it is non-invasive and relatively easy to find. It is located on the wrist (over the radial bone). To find it, place the victim's hand palm up and take the first two fingers of your hand (NEVER use your thumb, as it contains a pulse of its own) and on the thumb side of the victim's wrist you will feel a rounded piece of bone, move in from here 1-2cm in to a shallow dip at the side of the bone, and press your fingers in (gently), where you should be able to feel a pulse. Taking a pulse here can be a skill that takes practice,

so it is worth frequently testing this skill. Should there be no pulse in a victim who is pale and unwell, you are advised to seek medical assistance urgently.

- (b) **Carotid Pulse** - This is in the main artery which supplies the head and brain, and is located in the neck. This is best used on unconscious victims, or those victim where you are unable to find a radial pulse. To locate it, place your two fingers in to the indentation to the side of the windpipe, in line with the Adam's Apple (on men), or approximately the location a Adam's Apple would be on women.
- (c) **Pedal Pulse** - The pedal pulse can be found in several locations on the foot, and this is used when you suspect a broken leg, in order to ascertain if there is blood flowing to the foot.

When measuring a pulse you should measure the **pulse rate**. This is best achieved by counting the number of beats in 15 seconds, and then multiplying the result by four. You should also check if the pulse is regular or irregular.

Skin Colour and Temperature

Related to circulation, is the colour of the skin. Changes in circulation will cause the skin to be different colours, and you should note if the victim is flushed, pale, ashen, or blue tinged.

It should also be noted if the victim's skin is clammy, sweaty or very dry, and this information should be passed on to the ambulance crew.

Level of Consciousness

You can continue to use the acronym **AVPU** to assess if the victim's level of consciousness changes while you are with them. To recap, the levels are:

- A Alert
- V Voice induces response
- P Pain induces response
- U Unresponsive to stimuli

Pupils

Valuable information can be gained from looking a victim's pupils. For this purpose, first aid kits should have a penlight or small torch in them.

Ideally, the pupils of the eye should be equal and reactive to light, usually written down as **PEARL**.

- P Pupils
- E Equal
- A And
- R Reactive to
- L Light

To check this, ask the victim to look straight at you with both eyes. Look to see if both pupils are the same size and shape (be sensitive to those who may

be blind in one eye, or may even have a glass eye, although they will usually tell you).

To check if they are reactive, take the penlight, and ask the victim to look at your nose. Briefly (5 seconds or so) shield their eye with your hand from the light source where they are (sunlight, room lighting etc.), and then turn on the penlight, positioning it off to the side of their head. Move the penlight in over their eye quickly, and watch to see the size change. A normal reaction would be the pupil getting smaller quickly as the light is shone in to it. Repeat on the other eye.

If both pupils are the same, and both react, note this on your form as PEARL, or else note down what you did, or did not see.

Chapter 5

Circulatory Emergencies

5.1 External Bleeding

5.1.1 Introduction

Bleeding is a common reason for the application of first aid measures and can be internal or external. The principle difference is whether the blood leaves the body - external bleeding can be seen, whereas in internal bleeding, no blood can be seen.

There are many causes of external bleeding, which generally fall in to these main categories:

- **Abrasion** - Also called a graze, this is caused by transverse action of a foreign object against the skin, and usually does not penetrate below the epidermis
- **Laceration** - Irregular wound caused by blunt impact to soft tissue overlying hard tissue or tearing such as in childbirth
- **Incision** - A clean “surgical” wound, caused by a sharp object, such as a knife
- **Puncture** - Caused by an object penetrated the skin and underlying layers, such as a nail, needle or knife
- **Contusion** - Also known as a bruise, this is a blunt trauma damaging tissue under the surface of the skin
- **Avulsion** - A section of skin is detached from the underlying tissues, forming a flap
- **Amputation** - Amputations may be partial or complete.

5.1.2 Recognition

Recognizing external bleeding is usually easy, as the presence of blood should alert you to it. It should however be remembered that blood may be underneath or behind a victim. It may be difficult to find the source of bleeding, especially with large wounds or (even quite small) wounds with large amounts of bleeding. If there is more than 5 cups of bleeding, then the situation is life-threatening.



Figure 5.1: Minor bleeding from an abrasion.

5.1.3 Treatment

All external bleeding is treated using three key techniques, which allow the body's natural repair process to start. These can be remembered using the acronym mnemonic **RED**, which stands for:

- R Rest
- E Elevation
- D Direct pressure

Rest

In all cases, the less movement the wound undergoes, the easier the healing process will be, so rest is advised.

Elevation

Direct pressure is usually enough to stop most minor bleeds, but for larger bleeds, it may be necessary to elevate the wound above the level of the heart (while maintaining direct pressure). This decreases the blood flow to the affected area, slowing the blood flow, and assisting clotting.

Elevation only works on the peripheries of the body (limbs and head) and is not appropriate for body wounds. You should ask the victim to hold their wound as high as possible. You should assist them to do this if necessary, and use furniture or surrounding items to help support them in this position. If it is the legs affected, you should lie them on their back (supine), and raise their legs.

Direct Pressure

The most important of these three is direct pressure. This is simply placing pressure on the wound in order to stem the flow of blood. This is best done using a dressing, such as a sterile gauze pad (although in an emergency, any material is suitable).

If the blood starts to come through the dressing you are using, add additional dressings to the top, to a maximum of three. If you reach three dressings, you should remove all but the one in contact with the wound itself (as this may cause it to reopen) and continue to add pads on top. Repeat this again when you reach three dressings. The reason for not simply adding more dressings is

that it becomes harder to apply the direct pressure which is clearly needed if this much blood is produced.

Where an articulate area of the body is wounded (such as the arms or hands), it is important to consider the position of the area in keeping pressure on the wound. For example, if a hand is cut 'across' from the thumb to halfway across the palm, the wound can be closed with direct pressure by simply clasping the victim's hand shut. However, if the hand was wounded from between the two middle fingers down to the wrist, closing the hand would have the effect of opening the wound, and so the victim should have their hand kept flat.

In most cases, during the initial treatment of the bleed, you will apply pressure by hand in order to stem the flow of blood. In some cases, a dressing may help you do this as it can keep pressure consistently on the wound. If you stop the flow by hand, you should then consider dressing the wound properly, as below.

5.1.4 Dressing

Once the bleeding is slowed or stopped, or in some cases, to assist the slowing of the blood flow you should consider dressing the wound properly.

To dress a wound, use a sterile low-adherent pad, which will not stick to the wound, but will absorb the blood coming from it. Once this is in place, wrap a crepe or conforming bandage around firmly. It should be tight enough to apply some direct pressure, but should not be so tight as to cut blood flow off below the bandage. A simple check for the bandage being too tight on a limb wound is a capillary refill check; to do this, hold the hand or foot (dependent on what limb is injured) above the level of the heart and firmly pinch the nail. If it takes more than 2 seconds for the pink colour to return under the nail, then the bandage is likely to be too tight.

If the blood starts to come through the dressing you have applied, add another on top, to a maximum of three. If these are all saturated, remove the top two, leaving the closest dressing to the wound in place. This ensures that any blood clots that have formed are not disturbed; otherwise, the wound would be opened anew.

5.1.5 Special cases

Nosebleeds (epistaxis)

If a person has nosebleed, have them pinch the soft part of the nose firmly between thumb and forefinger, just below the end of the bone. If necessary, do this yourself, but it is preferable to have them do it themselves if they are able to do it effectively.

The victim should lean their head slightly forward and breathe through their mouth. You can also leave the head in a neutral position, but **never tilt the head back**. Tilting the head forward ensures that blood isn't ingested (as it can cause vomiting) or inhaled (choking hazard).

If you are unsuccessful at stopping the bleeding after 10 minutes of direct pressure, you should assess the blood flow. If the blood flow is minor, you could consider using an ice pack on the bridge of the nose to help stem the flow.

If the nose continues to bleed with a fast flow, you should seek medical assistance, probably from the ambulance.

Embedded Objects

If there is something embedded in the wound, do not remove it. Instead, apply pressure *around* the object using sterile gauze as described above. Rolled bandages are perfect for this. Be careful not to disturb the object, as moving it may exacerbate the bleeding. This doesn't apply to superficial splinters and such.

Stab, puncture or gunshot wounds

These wounds are life threatening, you should immediately call an ambulance. As always, you should check that you are not in danger when approaching these victims (from someone with a knife or gun, for instance). As with all embedded objects, ensure you do not remove the item from the body.

If possible, you should sit the victim up (as blood in the body will go to the lowest point, allowing the heart and lungs to work as efficiently as possible). You should also lean them to the injured side, keeping the healthy side free from incursion by blood.

Assess the victim for open chest wounds or abdominal injuries, and treat accordingly.

Amputations

If a body part has been amputated, immediately summon ambulance assistance, and treat the bleeding as above. Get the amputated part into a clean plastic bag (plastic), and place this bag into ice and water, sending it with the victim to the hospital. You should avoid putting the part in direct contact with ice, as this can cause irreparable damage, meaning that surgeons are unable to reattach it.

5.2 Internal Bleeding

5.2.1 Introduction

Internal bleeding is bleeding which occurs inside the body. Sometimes the blood will leak from inside the body through natural openings. Other times the blood stays inside the body, causing pain and shock, even though you cannot see the blood loss.

5.2.2 Causes

Internal bleeding can be caused numerous ways. Any time someone could have internal bleeding, you will do no harm by treating them for internal bleeding, but not treating the victim could lead to death.

Some causes include:

- Falls
- Automobile collisions
- Pedestrians struck by a vehicle
- Gunshot wounds
- Blast injuries
- Impaled objects
- Stab wounds

5.2.3 Recognition

A person may be bleeding internally if one of these things happens:

- Blood comes out of the nose or mouth (occurs from severe head trauma)
- Blood comes out of the ear (occurs from severe head trauma)
- Blood is in the stool
- Blood is in the urine
- Bright red blood, or blood like 'coffee-grounds', is in the vomit
- Blood comes from a woman's birth canal after an injury or during pregnancy
- Bruising over the abdominal or chest area
- Pain over vital organs
- Fractured femur

But remember, a person may be bleeding inside the body, even though you cannot see the bleeding. If you see the signs of shock and no apparent injuries, always suspect internal bleeding. Check the skin color changes. In cases of internal bleeding the skin may become pale and cold, and cyanosis may be present.

5.2.4 Treatment

As with any victim, before treating, put on disposable gloves and take other necessary body substance isolation precautions.

- Check the victim's ABCs.
 - If the victim has ABC complications, treat those first - ABCs always take priority.
- Call an ambulance
- Treat for shock
 - Assist the victim into the most comfortable position
 - Keep the victim warm
- Monitor ABCs and vitals until the ambulance arrives

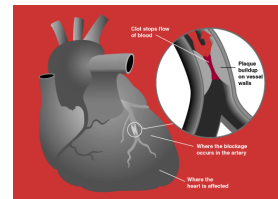
5.3 Heart Attack & Angina

5.3.1 Introduction

Heart attack (myocardial infarction) is when blood supply to the heart or part of the heart is cut off partially or completely, which leads to death of the heart muscle due to oxygen deprivation. Heart attacks usually occur after periods of rest or being recumbent, and only rarely occur after exercise (despite popular portrayal).

Angina (angina pectoris) is a *miniature heart attack* caused by a short term blockage. Angina almost always occurs after strenuous exercise or periods of high stress for the victim.

The key differentiation between a heart attack and angina is that, in line with their typical onset modes, angina should start to relieve very shortly after resting (a few minutes), whereas a heart attack will not relieve with rest.



5.3.2 Recognition

- Chest pain: tightness in the chest or between the shoulder blades, often radiating into the left arm, and the jaw
- Nausea or indigestion (especially in women)
- Pale, clammy skin
- Ashen grey skin

Figure 5.2: Heart attack can be caused by blockage in arteries supplying blood to the heart.

- Impending sense of doom
- Denial

5.3.3 Treatment

- **Assist the victim with medication**, if they have any. People with angina will often have nitroglycerin to control it; either as pills or a spray. The pills should never be touched with bare skin by the rescuer, as they cause migraine headache, and they are placed under the tongue for absorption. The spray should be taken on the bottom of the tongue. Only the victim should administer their medication. If they are unable to do so, then the rescuer should not do it for them. Helping to take the lid off or handing the bottle to the victim is fine, this should be documented if patient is transferred to other rescuers.
- **Call for an ambulance** if they don't have medication, or if the medication doesn't help
- **Loosen tight clothing**, especially around the neck
- **Assist the victim into a comfortable position**, such as the semi-sitting position: with the body leant back at about 45 degrees, with feet on the floor, but knees raised.
- If the patient is not on any anti-coagulant medicine such as heparin or warfarin, then assist them in taking one dose of aspirin if they decide to do so.
- **Continue monitoring vitals**
- Be prepared to do CPR should the victim go into cardiac arrest

5.4 Stroke & TIA

A **Stroke** is a small blockage in a blood vessel of the brain, which causes oxygen starvation to that part. This oxygen starvation can cause a loss of function, related to the area of the brain affected. Dependant on the length of time the area is blocked, the damage may become irreparable. The blockage is usually caused by a small blood clot, although incursions such as air bubbles can have the same effect.

TIA (Transient Ischaemic Attack) is characterized by temporary symptoms (about 20min) - sometimes called a *mini-stroke*.

5.4.1 Recognition

There are five key warning signs of stroke:

1. **Weakness** - Sudden loss of strength or sudden numbness in the face, arm or leg, even if temporary.
2. **Trouble speaking** - Sudden difficulty speaking or understanding or sudden confusion, even if temporary.
3. **Vision problems** - Sudden trouble with vision, even if temporary. This may include blurry, dim or patchy vision.
4. **Headache** - Sudden, severe and unusual headache.
5. **Dizziness** - Sudden loss of balance, especially with any of the above signs.

5.4.2 Treatment

To test for the affected side of a stroke, have the victim squeeze your hands at the same time. You will notice a difference in pressure that they may not.

Conscious victim

- **Call for an ambulance**
- Reassure the victim
- Encourage and facilitate the victim to move in to a position of comfort if possible. If they have significant paralysis, they may be unable to move themselves, so you should make them as comfortable as possible where they are. If possible, incline them to the unaffected side (if there is one), as this will help relieve some symptoms such as a feeling of floating. More importantly, it may allow blood to drain out the ear (which would be a good thing, in the case of a hemorrhagic stroke) or it may allow blood to flow with the aid of gravity into the oxygen-starved hemisphere.
- Take vitals regularly, and get a full history

Unconscious victim

- **Call for an ambulance**
- Assess the victim's ABCs (begin CPR if not breathing)
- Assist the victim into the recovery position on their *unaffected* side (rationale mentioned above).

Chapter 6

Respiratory Emergencies

6.1 Anaphylaxis

6.1.1 Introduction

Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening medical emergency because of rapid constriction of the airway, often within minutes of exposure to the allergen. It is commonly triggered by insect stings and foods such as shellfish or peanuts. Call for help immediately. First aid for anaphylaxis consists of obtaining advanced medical care at once. Look to see if a device such as an Epi-pen is available - most people who know they have anaphylactic reactions will carry an Epi-pen with them. First aiders in many jurisdictions are now permitted to administer epinephrine in the form of an Epi-pen if the victim is unable to do so themselves. *Check what the law says in your area.*

6.1.2 Recognition

- Hives or rash all over accompanied by itchiness
- Swelling or puffiness of the lymph nodes, especially around the neck and mouth
- Swelling of the airway and tongue
- Difficulty breathing, wheezing or gasping

6.1.3 Treatment

- **Call EMS immediately**
- Have the victim administer their Epi-pen if possible. If the victim is unable to administer their Epi-pen and it is legal to do so, administer the Epi-pen for them.

- Encourage the victim to breathe slowly; calm them down
- The victim should rest until EMS arrives
- Monitor ABCs and begin CPR if required

Administering an EpiPen

EpiPens are the most common form of epinephrine auto-injectors, and are designed for ease of use. There are instructions in the tube with the auto-injector, but you should know how to use one ahead of time. They're designed to inject through clothes, so you don't have to remove the victim's pants - even if they're wearing a heavy material like denim. Whenever possible, the victim should inject themselves, but if they're unable to do so, you *may* be legally permitted to inject the victim.

Administering an EpiPen is not legal in all jurisdictions without proper training and certification. If it is legal for you to do so, follow these simple steps: 1) remove the grey cap 2) press black tip firmly against outer thigh 3) hold for 10 seconds 4) dispose safely

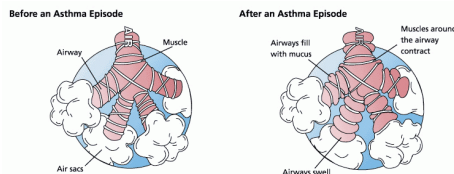
Remove the auto-injector from the tube. One end has a black tip - this is where the needle will come out. DO NOT TOUCH THIS TIP! The other end has a grey cap. Remove the grey cap, hold the EpiPen in your fist, and press it firmly against the outside of the victim's outer thigh. There should be an audible click. If there is not, try again but pressing harder. *Hold the auto-injector in place for 10 seconds.* When you remove it, replace the EpiPen into the tube *needle end first.* When EMS arrives, they can dispose of it for you.

6.2 Asthma & Hyperventilation

6.2.1 Recognition

Asthma is a medical condition which causes swelling of the airway, constricting airflow. Asthma is characterized by difficulty breathing, wheezing, increased secretions in the airway, and a history of asthma.

Hyperventilation is simply breathing at an inappropriately high rate. Hyperventilation can be recognized by fast breathing which is inappropriate for the circumstances, a feeling of not being able to catch one's breath, and lightheadedness.



(a) Asthma attacks are characterized by inflammation of the airway, which constricts air exchange.



(b) Asthma inhalers come in several styles.

6.2.2 Treatment

- **If the victim has a fast-acting inhaler for asthma attacks, help them self-administer the medication**
- Have the victim match your breathing patterns - calm the victim while slowing their breathing rate
- Call EMS if the victim's condition does not improve or if the victim's level of consciousness is lowered

6.3 Obstructed Airway

6.3.1 Conscious Victims

Abdominal thrusts are used to clear the obstructed airway of a conscious victim. It is an effective life-saving measure in cases of severe airway obstruction.

A person performing abdominal thrusts uses their hands to exert pressure on the bottom of the diaphragm. This compresses the lungs and exerts pressure on any object lodged in the trachea, hopefully expelling it. This amounts to an artificial cough. (The victim of an obstructed airway, having lost the ability to draw air into the lungs, has lost the ability to cough on their own.)

Even when performed correctly, abdominal thrusts can injure the person they are performed on. Abdominal thrusts should never be performed on someone who can still cough, breathe, or speak - encourage them to cough instead.

Signs of a severe airway obstruction

- **The person desperately grabs at their neck** - this is the universal sign of choking
- The person can not speak or cry out
- The person's face turns blue from lack of oxygen (cyanosis)

Obstructed Airway for Adults & Children

Abdominal thrusts are only used on conscious adult or child victims with severe airway obstructions. Before attempting abdominal thrusts, ask the victim "Are you choking?" If the victim can reply verbally, you should not interfere, but encourage the victim to cough.

If the victim's airway obstruction is severe, then perform abdominal thrusts:

1. The rescuer stands behind the victim and wraps their arms around the victim's sides, underneath the victim's arms
2. One hand is made into a fist and placed, thumb side in, flat against the victim's upper abdomen, below the ribs but above the navel

3. The other hand grabs the fist and directs it in a series of upward thrusts until the object obstructing the airway is expelled
4. The thrusts should not compress or restrict the ribcage in any way
5. If you're not able to compress the victim's diaphragm due to their size or pregnancy, then perform the thrusts at the chest

If the victim loses consciousness, call for an ambulance. THEY FALL - YOU CALL



Figure 6.1: Abdominal thrusts are performed only on conscious adult or child victims with a severe airway obstruction.

Obstructed Airway for Infants

For infants, a severe obstruction may be accompanied by a high-pitched, crow-like sound which is not present in adults or children. This is due to the incomplete formation of the infant's airway. *Instead of abdominal thrusts*, alternate 5 chest thrusts with 5 back blows:

- Hold the infant with the head in your hand, and the spine along your forearm and the head below the rest of the body
- Compress the chest 5 times as you would for infant CPR
- Switch the infant to your other forearm, so their chest is now against the arm
- Perform 5 back blows, keeping the infant's head below the rest of the body
- Continue until the obstruction is cleared, or the infant goes unconscious

6.3.2 Unconscious Victims

If a victim has become unconscious as a result of an obstructed airway, you should immediately call for assistance from the emergency medical services, and commence a primary assessment, starting with Airway and if required, commence CPR.

Chapter 7

Soft Tissue Injuries

7.1 Burns

7.1.1 Recognition

There are 3 degrees of burn:

1. **First-degree** burns are characterized by redness and pain at the site
2. **Second-degree** burns are surrounded by first-degree burns, and have blisters in the centre
3. **Third-degree** burns are surrounded by first- and second-degree burns, and have black, grey or white, charred flesh, and penetrate beyond the skin

Burns may be caused by heat (thermal burns), chemicals (wet or dry), or by electricity.

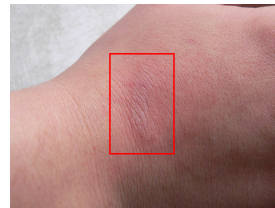


Figure 7.1: A second-degree thermal burn - notice the blister beginning to form in the centre of the burn.

7.1.2 Treatment

Thermal burns

Burns should be immediately immersed in cold running water, or shower for large area. Do not wait to remove clothes. This should be maintained for at least 10-15 minutes.

Blistered or open burn wounds should be cleaned and covered with non-adhesive gauze (preferably bactericidal) and cotton dressing. **Do not use butter, oils, creams, etc.;** they can trap heat and increase risk of infection. Also do not use antiseptics that may aggravate sensitive skin.

Burns that cover more than ten percent of the body, are larger than the victim's palm, or are on the face are medical emergencies and need to be treated as such: **Call EMS**. Also, burns to the hands or groin require physician assessment.

Chemical burns

Call EMS immediately. If there is a dry chemical, brush it off the skin using paper, cloth, or with a gloved hand. Once the bulk of the dry chemical is gone, flush with running water as above. If the burn is caused by a wet chemical, flush with water.

Electrical burns

Electrical burns look like third-degree burns, but are not surrounded by first- and second-degree burns. They always come in pairs: an entry wound (smallest) and an exit wound (larger). There is no need to flush with water, as there is neither heat nor chemicals causing further damage. Instead, cover the wounds with nonstick, sterile dressings, assess ABCs and begin CPR if required. Call EMS immediately.



Figure 7.2: A third-degree burn. Charred, blackened flesh; the burn penetrates beyond the skin.

7.2 Electrocution

Electrocution is a related set of injuries caused by direct contact with live electrical connections. The effects can vary from very minor to causing cardiac arrest.

7.2.1 Treatment

Before attempting to treat an electrocution victim, ensure they are not still in contact with live electrics. Turn off the power at the main or remove the victim from contact using a non-conducting material, such as a wooden pole

- **Be aware of Danger** - The clear danger in this situation is the electrical supply.
- If the victim is still touching a live electrical source, either turn off the power to the source, or break the victim's contact with it. Find a non-conductive object (wooden broom handles are commonly used) and break the contact between the victim and the source.
- **Call an ambulance immediately** - all victims of electrocution, whether conscious or unconscious require assessment in hospital.
- After ensuring the area is safe, begin a primary assessment - **check ABCs & begin CPR if required.**
- Conduct a secondary assessment looking specifically for **2** electrical burns.

- Electrical burns look like third-degree burns, but are not surrounded by first- and second-degree burns. They always come in pairs: an entry wound (smaller) and exit wound (larger). There is no need to flush with water, as there is neither heat nor chemicals causing further damage, although it may alleviate the pain for the victim. You should cover the wounds with nonstick, sterile dressings.

7.3 Chest & Abdominal Wounds

7.3.1 Closed Chest Wounds

Chest wounds can be inherently serious as this area of the body protects the majority of the vital organs. Most chest trauma should receive professional medical attention, so consider calling for an ambulance for any serious chest injury.

The most likely injuries that can be caused with a chest injury include broken ribs. A single broken rib can be very painful for the patient, and a rib fracture carries with it the risk of causing internal injury, such as puncturing the lung, which can lead in turn to the lung collapsing.

There are also some specific, more complicated, rib fracture patterns, which include:

1. **Flail chest** 2 or more rib fractures along the same rib(s)
 - Can cause a floating segment of the chest wall which makes breathing difficult
2. **Stove chest** all ribs fractured
 - Can cause the entire ribcage to lose its rigidity, causing great difficulty breathing

Recognition

- Trouble breathing
- Shallow breathing
- Tenderness at site of injury
- Deformity & bruising of chest
- Uneven expansion of chest
- Pain upon movement/deep breathing/coughing
- Cyanosis
- May cough up blood
- Crackling sensation in skin if lung is punctured



Figure 7.3: Uneven expansion of the chest is indicative of flail or stove chest.

Treatment

- **Call for an ambulance**
- Assess ABCs and intervene as necessary
- Assist the victim into a position of comfort
- Conduct a secondary survey
- Monitor vitals carefully

7.3.2 Open Chest Wounds

An **open pneumothorax** or **sucking chest wound** - the chest wall has been penetrated (by knife, bullet, falling onto a sharp object...).

Recognition

- An open chest wound escaping air
- Entrance and possible exit wound (exit wounds are more severe)
- Trouble breathing
- Sucking sound as air passes through opening in chest wall
- Blood or blood-stained bubbles may be expelled with each exhalation
- Coughing up blood

Treatment

- **Call for an ambulance**
- Assess ABCs and intervene as necessary
- Do not remove any embedded objects
- Flutter valve over wound, as described below
- Lateral positioning: victim's injured side down
- Treat for shock
- Conduct a secondary survey
- Monitor vitals carefully

Making a flutter valve

Get some sort of plastic that is bigger than the wound. Ideas: credit card or similar, Ziploc bag, some first aid kits will have a ready-to-use valve. Tape the plastic patch over the wound on only 3 sides. The 4th side is left open, allowing blood to drain and air to escape. This opening should be at the bottom (as determined by the victims position).

7.3.3 Abdominal Injuries

If a trauma injury has caused the victim's internal organs to protrude outside the abdominal wall, **do not push them back in**. Instead, cover the organs with a moist, sterile dressing (**not paper products - use gauze**). Do not allow the victim to eat or drink, though they may complain of extreme thirst. **CALL AN AMBULANCE** and monitor ABCs until the emergency medical team arrives.

Chapter 8

Bone & Joint Injuries

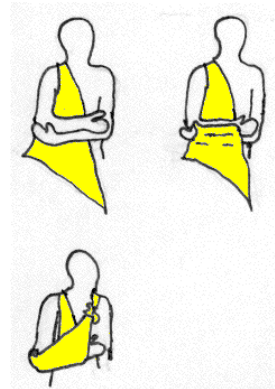
8.1 Fractures

8.1.1 Introduction

Bones are very strong because they provide structure to the human body, but they can be broken by falls, impacts or compression. A fracture which remains internal is a *simple* or *closed* fracture. A fracture which breaks through tissues to become exposed is a *compound* or *open* fracture.

8.1.2 Recognition

- Bruising, swelling, pain and/or deformity at the site
- History of impact or a fall



8.1.3 Treatment

The treatment can be remembered using the acronym

RICE:

- R Rest
- I Immobilize
- C Cold
- E Elevate

NB: this is different from the **RICE** for sprains, strains and dislocations. Remember that immobilization will reduce pain for fractures, but is pointless for sprains and strains.

COMPOUND FRACTURES REQUIRE EMS ASSISTANCE.

The primary first aid technique for immobilizing fractures is splinting. Good splinting can reduce pain and discomfort, especially if the victim must be moved.

Figure 8.1: The arm sling.

Splinting a fracture should immobilize the joint above the break, the break itself and the joint below the break. Test distal circulation and sensation before and after immobilizing.

Immobilizing fractures

The proper method of slinging depends on where the injury occurred on the arm. After applying a sling, ensure circulation to the arm has not been compromised by doing a distal circulation check. Remember also that moving an arm into a position where you can put a sling on it may be painful for the victim. If that is the case, simply immobilize in the position found. You will have to improvise something based on the victims position of comfort.

The arm sling for injuries to the forearm

- Support the injured forearm approximately parallel to the ground with the wrist slightly higher than the elbow.
- Place an open triangular bandage between the body and the arm, with its apex towards the elbow.
- Extend the upper point of the bandage over the shoulder on the uninjured side.
- Bring the lower point up over the arm, across the shoulder on the injured side to join the upper point and tie firmly with a reef knot.
- Ensure the elbow is secure by folding the excess bandage over the elbow, securing it with a safety pin.

This can be accomplished by using the victims shirt or sweater as a sling. Simply pin the bottom hem to their chest using multiple safety pins, going over the arm. This works surprisingly well!

Elevated sling for injuries to the shoulder

- Support the victims arm with the elbow beside the body and the hand extended towards the uninjured shoulder.
- Place an opened triangular bandage over the forearm and hand, with the apex towards the elbow.
- Extend the upper point of the bandage over the uninjured shoulder.
- Tuck the lower part of the bandage under the injured arm, bring it under the elbow and around the back and extend the lower point up to meet the upper point at the shoulder.
- Tie firmly with a reef knot.
- Secure the elbow by folding the excess material and applying a safety pin, and then ensure that the sling is tucked under the arm giving firm support.

Collar and cuff for upper arm or rib injuries

- Allow the elbow to hang naturally at the side and place the hand extended towards the shoulder on the uninjured side.
- Form a clove hitch by forming two loops one towards you, the other away.
- Put the loops together by sliding your hands under the loops and closing with a clapping motion. If you can tie a clove hitch, simply tie it on the wrist.
- Slide the clove hitch over the hand and gently pull it firmly to secure the wrist. Extend the points of the bandage to either side of the neck, and tie firmly with a reef knot.
- Allow the arm to hang naturally.
- **It is especially important for this sling that you ensure that circulation to the hand is not compromised do distal circulation checks often**

8.1.4 Femoral fractures

The femur is the largest bone in the body, and has a large artery, the femoral artery, directly beside it. Because a mechanism of injury which can fracture the femur is likely to also displace the fracture, it is possible that the femoral artery will be damaged internally. Damage to the femoral artery is likely to cause massive internal bleeding, so it is a major emergency; **Call EMS** immediately. Be sure to maintain as much immobilization as possible and monitor ABCs until EMS arrives.

8.2 Sprains, & Strains**8.2.1 Sprain or Fracture?**

One of the most important skills for a first aider to have when dealing with acute pain in joints caused by trauma, is recognition of soft tissue injuries (sprains and strains) from fractures. This is "not" an easy skill, and unless you are sure, you should treat for a fracture, and help the victim obtain suitable medical assistance.

Small fractures, such as hairline fractures, can present with many of the same symptoms as sprains and strains. If the patient demonstrates any of the following symptoms, you should treat for a possible fracture.

- Deformity in the skeletal structure
- Crepitus - A grinding or cracking sound as you move the affected area (usually accompanied by extreme pain)

- Pain on movement causing the patient to pass out or vomit
- Bony tenderness - Pain when you push directly on the bone
- No pulse or a weak pulse below injury site - This is a serious problem, and treatment is detailed under fractures
- Inability to bear any weight following 1 hour of treatment for sprain

The absence of any of these symptoms does not necessarily preclude a fracture as a possibility, and the first aider should advise every patient that whilst they believe it is likely to be a soft tissue injury, the **only** definitive diagnosis is done by x-ray. If symptoms do not improve within a few hours of treatment for soft tissue injuries, they should seek medical attention at a hospital, where their injury can be assessed fully.

8.2.2 Treatment

The treatment for sprains and strains follows the simple acronym **RICE**. Some protocols also use a RICE acronym for fractures, but it is important to differentiate the two as they require different treatment.

- | | | |
|---|-------------|---|
| R | Rest | Rest is very important for soft tissue injuries, both in the short term and for longer term care. |
| I | Immobilize | Ice should be applied periodically, for around 10-20 minutes at a time. You should then take the ice off for around the double the time it was on for (so if you put ice on an injury for 20 minutes, you should leave it without ice for 40 minutes after). In order to avoid problems, always place some fabric between the ice and the skin (the bandage used for compression (below) is perfect). |
| C | Compression | Compression is a good aid to healing, as well as providing additional support to the limb to help the victim bear weight. This is best achieved with a relatively tight bandage (although blood should still freely circulate past the point of injury - always check capillary refill). |
| E | Elevate | Where appropriate, the injury should be elevated, as this will help reduce the localized swelling which occurs. |

NB: this is different than the other **RICE** for fractures. Remember that compression will reduce pain for these injuries, but not fractures.

8.3 Head & Facial Injuries

8.3.1 Head Injuries

Head wounds must be treated with particular care, since there is always the possibility of brain damage. The general treatment for head wounds is the same

as that for other fresh wounds. However, certain special precautions must be observed if you are giving first aid to a person who has suffered a head wound. Victims with a head injury causing decreased level of consciousness (no matter how brief) require assessment by a physician. *Victims with a head injury also require assessment for a potential spinal injury.* Any mechanism of injury that can cause a head injury can also cause a spinal injury.

Concussion

- Mild head injury that causes a brief “short-circuit” of the brain
- Essentially, the brain has been rattled within the skull
- No damage or injury to brain tissue
- Possibly unconscious for a short period of time
- Dazed and confused for several minutes
- Vomiting
- Visual disturbances (seeing stars)
- Amnesia (memory loss)
- Pupils unequal in size or un-reactive to light
- Head pain
- Anxiety & agitation

Compression

- Pressure on the brain caused by a build-up of fluids or a depressed skull fracture
- The brain has been bruised
- Damage to brain tissue is likely
- All the signs & symptoms of concussion, listed above
- *Symptoms usually worsen over time*

Treatment

- EMS
- Immobilize spine if required
- Treat for any bleeding, bruising or swelling (if you suspect a skull fracture, do not apply pressure instead, use a thick dressing with as little pressure as possible)

Notes for head injuries

- If the level of consciousness is altered, call EMS
- Do not use direct pressure to control bleeding if the skull is depressed or obviously fractured, as this would cause further injury by compressing the brain

8.3.2 Injuries involving the eye

Wounds that involve the eyelids or the soft tissue around the eye must be handled carefully to avoid further damage. If the injury does not involve the eyeball, apply a sterile compress and hold it in place with a firm bandage. If the eyeball appears to be injured, use a loose bandage. (Remember that you must NEVER attempt to remove any object that is embedded in the eyeball or that has penetrated it; just apply a dry, sterile compress to cover both eyes, and hold the compress in place with a loose bandage). Any person who has suffered a facial wound that involves the eye, the eyelids, or the tissues around the eye must receive medical attention as soon as possible. Be sure to keep the victim lying down. Use a stretcher for transport.

Many eye wounds contain foreign objects. Dirt, coal, cinders, eyelashes, bits of metal, and a variety of other objects may become lodged in the eye. Since even a small piece of dirt is intensely irritating to the eye, the removal of such objects is important. However, the eye is easily damaged. Impairment of vision (or even total loss of vision) can result from fumbling, inept attempts to remove foreign objects from the eye. The following precautions must be observed:

- DO NOT allow the victim to rub the eye.
- DO NOT press against the eye or manipulate it in any way that might cause the object to become embedded in the tissues of the eye. Be very gentle; roughness is almost sure to cause injury to the eye.
- DO NOT use such things as knives, toothpicks, matchsticks, or wires to remove the object.
- DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES ATTEMPT TO REMOVE AN OBJECT THAT IS EMBEDDED IN THE EYEBALL OR THAT HAS PENETRATED THE EYE! If you see a splinter or other object sticking out from the eyeball, leave it alone! Only specially trained medical personnel can hope to save the victims sight if an object has actually penetrated the eyeball.

Small objects that are lodged on the surface of the eye or on the membrane lining the eyelids can usually be removed by the following procedures:

1. Try to wash the eye gently with lukewarm, sterile water. A sterile medicine dropper or a sterile syringe can be used for this purpose. Have the victim lie down, with the head turned slightly to one side. Hold the eyelids apart. Direct the flow of water to the inside corner of the eye, and let it run down to the outside corner. Do not let the water fall directly onto the eyeball.
2. Gently pull the lower lid down, and instruct the victim to look up. If you can see the object, try to remove it with the corner of a clean handkerchief or with a small moist cotton swab. You can make the swab by twisting cotton around a wooden applicator, not too tightly, and moistening it with sterile water.
 - CAUTION: Never use dry cotton anywhere near the eye. It will stick to the eyeball or to the inside of the lids, and you will have the problem of removing it as well as the original object.
3. If you cannot see the object when the lower lid is pulled down, turn the upper lid back over a smooth wooden applicator. Tell the victim to look down. Place the applicator lengthwise across the center of the upper lid. Grasp the lashes of the upper lid gently but firmly. Press gently with the applicator. Pull up on the eyelashes, turning the lid back over the applicator. If you can see the object, try to remove it with a moist cotton swab or with the corner of a clean handkerchief.
4. If the foreign object cannot be removed by any of the above methods, DO NOT MAKE ANY FURTHER ATTEMPTS TO REMOVE IT. Instead, place a small, thick gauze dressing over both eyes and hold it in place with a loose bandage. This limits movement of the injured eye.
5. Get medical help for the victim at the earliest opportunity.

8.4 Suspected Spinal Injuries

The spinal cord is a thick nerve that runs down the neck and back; it is protected by bones called vertebrae. If the spinal cord is injured, this can lead to paralysis. Since the vertebrae protect the spinal cord, it is generally difficult to cause such an injury. Note that diagnostic imaging, such as an x-ray, is required to conclusively determine if a spinal injury exists. If a spinal injury is suspected, the victim **must** be treated as though one does exist.

8.4.1 Recognition

- Mental confusion (such as paranoia or euphoria)
- Dizziness
- Head, neck or back pain

- Paralysis
- Any fall where the head or neck has fallen more than two metres (just over head height on an average male)
- Cerebrospinal fluid in the nose or ears
- Resistance to moving the head
- Pupils which are not equal and reactive to light
- Head or back injury
- Priapism

8.4.2 Treatment

The victim should not be moved unless absolutely necessary. Without moving the victim, check if the victim is breathing. If they are not, CPR must be initiated; the victim must be rolled while attempting to minimize movement of the spine. If the victim is breathing, immobilize their spine in the position found. The easiest way to immobilize the spine in the position found is sandbagging. Despite the name, it doesn't necessarily require bags of sand. Simply pack towels, clothing, bags of sand etc. around the victim's head such that it is immobilized. Be sure to leave their face accessible, since you'll need to monitor their breathing.

Life over limb - Immobilize the spine as best as you can, but Airway, Breathing and Circulation take priority.

If you must roll the victim over to begin CPR, take great care to keep their spine immobilized. You may want to recruit bystanders to help you. Hands-on training is the only way to learn the various techniques which are appropriate for use in this situation.

Aquatic Spinal Injury Management

Many spinal injuries are the result of a dive into shallow water. Lifeguards and lifesavers receive specialized training to manage spinal injuries in the water. Such hands-on training is the only way to learn the various techniques which are appropriate for use in such situations.

Chapter 9

Environmental Illness & Injury

9.1 Heat Illness & Injury

9.1.1 Heat Cramps

Heat cramps usually occur when a person has been active in hot weather and is dehydrated.

Treating heat cramps is very simple, do the following:

- Remove the victim from the hot environment, a shady area will suffice.
- Stretch the calf and thigh muscles gently through the cramp. This usually results in immediate relief.
- Hydrate the victim, use a small concentration of salt for best results. (ex. Giving the person a saltine cracker to eat while drinking)
- Have the victim rest

Should the cramping continue, seek further medical advice.

9.1.2 Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion is a milder form of heat-related illness that can develop after several days of exposure to high temperatures and inadequate or unbalanced replacement of fluids. Those most prone to heat exhaustion are elderly people, people with high blood pressure, and people working or exercising in a hot environment.

Symptoms of Heat Exhaustion

- Heavy sweating
- Paleness
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fainting

Treatment of Heat Exhaustion

- Loosen the clothing.
- Apply cool wet cloths.
- Move the victim to either a cool or an air-conditioned area, and fan the victim.

The treatment priority for heat exhaustion is to cool the victim. Heat exhaustion is not life-threatening (unlike heat stroke), so EMS is not needed unless the victim's condition worsens to the point of entering heat stroke. If the victim's level of consciousness is affected, that is heat stroke.

9.1.3 Heat Stroke

Heatstroke occurs when the core body temperature rises too far for the body's natural cooling mechanisms to function. It is a serious, life-threatening problem that can cause death in minutes. The treatment priority with heat stroke is to call EMS and *cool the victim down*.

When you provide first aid for heatstroke, remember that this is a true life-and-death emergency. The longer the victim remains overheated, the higher the chances of irreversible body damage or even death occurring.

Symptoms of Heat Stroke

- Unconscious or has a markedly abnormal mental status
- Flushed, hot, and dry skin (although it may be moist initially from previous sweating or from attempts to cool the person with water)

- May experience dizziness, confusion, or delirium
- May have slightly elevated blood pressure at first that falls later
- May be hyperventilating
- Core temperature of $> 105^{\circ}\text{F}$

Treatment of Heatstroke

- Notify EMS.
- Cool the victim's body immediately by dousing the body with cold water.
 - Apply wet, cold towels to the whole body.
 - Pack ice into the victim's heat-loss areas (underarms, groin, neck). Do not let ice contact the victim's bare skin as this may cause frostbite!
 - Wetting and Evaporating measures work best. (Think, artificial sweating.)
- Move the victim to the coolest possible place and remove as much clothing as possible (ensure privacy).
- Maintain an open airway.
- Expose the victim to a fan or air-conditioner since drafts will promote cooling.
 - Immersing the victim in a cold water bath is also effective.
- Give the victim (if conscious) cool water to drink.
 - Do **not** give any hot drinks or stimulants.
 - **Never** give an unconscious victim something to drink as it may obstruct the airway or cause vomiting.
- Get the victim to a medical facility as soon as possible. Cooling measures must be continued while the victim is being transported.

Be prepared to begin CPR should the victim become unconscious, monitor their vitals throughout treatment.

9.2 Cold Illness & Injury

9.2.1 Frostbite

Frostbite is when tissues freeze. If the frozen tissue is more than skin deep, this is considered *deep* frostbite.

Treatment for frostbite is as follows:

- Notify EMS as soon as possible or be prepared to transport victim to a medical facility, even after treatment of frostbite.
- Make sure there is no risk of re-freezing. Skin that re-freezes after thawing will have more damage.
- Remove victim from cold environment, ensure there is no possibility of hypothermia. (If there is, see below.)
- Fill a shallow container with enough water to cover the frostbitten body part. Make sure the water is at room temperature. The water does not have to be cool, but it cannot be too warm. The warmer the water, the worse the pain.
- Immerse the injured area, ensure that the skin does not come into contact with anything!
- Repeat the above step by refreshing the water as it cools until the skin is back to a normal color and texture. This may take several hours depending on the severity of the injury.

Remember to transport the victim to a medical assistance for further assessment after the above steps.

9.2.2 Hypothermia

Hypothermia is when the body's core temperature drops so low the body can no longer warm itself back up. Severe hypothermia is classified as when the body drops below 95 degrees Fahrenheit.

Treatment for victims of hypothermia is as follows:

- Remove the victim from the cold environment.
- For cases of extreme hypothermia, where the patient is showing signs of confusion, slurred speech, fumbling hands, or go unconscious, notify EMS.
- Remove wet clothing from the victim and replace with dry clothing. (A dry hat is recommended to be worn.)
- Wrap victim in blankets.
- Use heat packs to warm the patient. Do not allow the packs to touch naked skin.
- Victims who are Alert may drink warm liquids. (Non-alcoholic and not hot.)

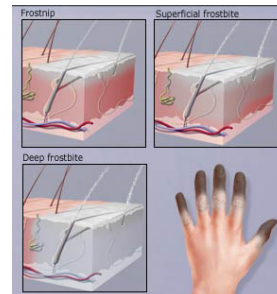


Figure 9.1: Three types of frostbite.

Be careful not to jostle a victim of extreme hypothermia as this may cause cardiac arrest!

Warning: Victims of hypothermia may become worse as they warm, this is due to cold blood moving towards the core of the body. If a patient goes unconscious, check their ABCs and notify EMS.

“Nobody’s dead until they’re warm and dead” First aid procedures must therefore continue until professional help is available.

9.3 Pressure-Related Illness & Injury

Divers and swimmers alike must avoid injuries caused by changes in air pressure. The weight of the water column above the diver causes an increase in air pressure in any compressible material (wetsuit, lungs, sinus) in proportion to depth, in the same way that atmospheric air causes a pressure of 14.7 lbs per square inch at sea level. These pressure injuries & illnesses are most common in divers, but some can affect skin divers (snorkellers) or swimmers.

9.3.1 Treatment

- Call EMS
- Monitor ABCs and vitals
- Raise the victim’s legs and feet if possible
 - If there are bubbles present in the bloodstream, this will help keep them from the internal organs. Bubbles tend to travel up - away from the brain (preventing stroke) and heart (preventing heart attack).
- Recompression may be required; tell EMS that the situation involves a pressure-related injury or illness
- If you are trained in oxygen administration and have the appropriate equipment, administer high-flow O_2 .

9.3.2 Decompression Sickness (the Bends)

As divers ascend, the pressure the water column exerts on them decreases, which decreases the solubility of gasses. Those gases will no longer stay dissolved in the bloodstream, and escape at a maximum rate. If the ascent is faster than the rate that the gases can escape from the bloodstream is, then the gases form bubbles. The location of these bubbles determines what type of decompression sickness develops; if the bubbles form in the lungs, then air embolism develops.

Recognition

Bubbles can form anywhere in the body, but symptomatic sensation is most frequently observed in the shoulders, elbows, knees, and ankles.

This table gives symptoms for the different DCS types.

- The “bends” (joint pain) accounts for about 60 to 70 percent of all altitude DCS cases, with the shoulder being the most common site. These types are classified medically as DCS I.
- Neurological symptoms are present in 10 to 15 percent of all DCS cases with headache and visual disturbances the most common. DCS cases with neurological symptoms are generally classified as DCS II.
- The “chokes” are rare and occur in less than two-percent of all DCS cases.
- Skin manifestations are present in about 10 to 15 percent of all DCS cases.

9.3.3 Oxygen Toxicity

Oxygen toxicity occurs when oxygen in the body exceeds a safe level.

Recognition

- Dizziness
- Nausea and twitching, especially on the face
- Seizures
- Unconsciousness

9.3.4 Air Embolism

As divers ascend, the pressure the water column exerts on them decreases, which decreases the solubility of gasses. Those gases will no longer stay dissolved in the bloodstream, and escape at a maximum rate. If the ascent is faster than the rate that the gases can escape from the bloodstream is, then the gases form bubbles. The location of these bubbles determines what type of decompression sickness develops; if the bubbles form in the lungs, then air embolism develops.

Air embolism can also develop when a diver receives pressure damage to their lungs following a rapid ascent where the breath is inappropriately held against a closed glottis, allowing pressure to build up inside the lungs, relative to the blood. The gas bubbles can impede the flow of oxygen-rich blood to the brain and vital organs. They can also cause clots to form in blood vessels.

Gas embolism and decompression sickness (DCS) may be difficult to distinguish, as they may have similar symptoms, especially in the central nervous system. The treatment for both is the same, because they are both the result of gas bubbles in the body.

Table 9.1: Signs and symptoms of decompression sickness

DCS Type	Bubble Location	Signs & Symptoms
Bends	Mostly large joints of the body (elbows, shoulders, hip, wrists, knees, ankles)	Localized deep pain, ranging from mild (a "niggle") to excruciating. Sometimes a dull ache, but rarely a sharp pain. Active and passive motion of the joint aggravates the pain. The pain may be reduced by bending the joint to find a more comfortable position. If caused by altitude, pain can occur immediately or up to many hours later.
Neurologic	Brain	Confusion or memory loss; headache; spots in visual field, tunnel vision, double vision, or blurry vision; unexplained extreme fatigue or behaviour changes; seizures, dizziness, vertigo, nausea, vomiting and unconsciousness may occur
	Spinal Cord	Abnormal sensations such as burning, stinging, and tingling around the lower chest and back; symptoms may spread from the feet up and may be accompanied by ascending weakness or paralysis; girdling abdominal or chest pain
	Peripheral Nerves	Urinary and rectal incontinence; abnormal sensations, such as numbness, burning, stinging and tingling; muscle weakness or twitching
Chokes	Lungs	Burning deep chest pain (under the sternum); pain is aggravated by breathing; shortness of breath; dry constant cough
Skin bends	Skin	Itching usually around the ears, face, neck arms, and upper torso; sensation of tiny insects crawling over the skin; mottled or marbled skin usually around the shoulders, upper chest and abdomen, with itching; swelling of the skin, accompanied by tiny scar-like skin depressions

Chapter 10

Medical Conditions

10.1 Diabetes

Diabetes: a disease causing an inability to regulate the level of sugar (glucose) in the blood

Insulin: a hormone that allows glucose to travel from the bloodstream into the cells

10.1.1 Hypoglycemia (Insulin Shock)

Hypoglycemia is a condition in which blood sugar levels are too low to power the body. The symptoms of hypoglycemia will come on suddenly.

Causes

- Lack of food (low glucose)
- Excessive exercise
- Too much insulin
- Vomited meal

Recognition

- Pale, cool, clammy
- Dizziness, weakness
- Hunger
- Confusion (like being drunk)
- Strong, rapid pulse (May be normal in some patients)

- Seizures

May be confused with stroke or other cardiac disorders.

Treatment

- EMS
- Monitor ABCs
- Assist with glucose in any form (candy, juice, Monogel)
- Treat for shock
- *Encourage any victim of a diabetic emergency to use their test kit if it is nearby.*
- Giving glucose to a victim with insulin shock will help.
- *Dont give glucose to an unconscious victim* as it can easily become an airway obstruction.
- Some victims carry with them glucagon injections as a rapid treatment for severe insulin shock. Assist them if required.

10.1.2 Hyperglycemia

Hyperglycemia is a condition in which the body's blood sugar level is too high to maintain. This condition is less common and usually occurs very slowly, over the course of several days.

Causes

- Victim doesnt take enough insulin
- Eats too much (high glucose)
- Has an infection

Recognition

- Flush/redness of skin
- Deep or rapid respirations
- Dehydration/extreme thirst/excessive urination
- Loss of appetite
- Weak/dizzy
- Weak, rapid pulse



Figure 10.1: If possible, have the victim test the glucose level to correctly identify Hypoglycemia or Hyperglycemia.

Treatment

- EMS
- Monitor ABCs
- Treat shock
- *Encourage any victim of a diabetic emergency to use their test kit if it is nearby.*
- Some victims carry with them insulin injections as a rapid treatment for hyperglycemia. Assist them if required.

10.2 Seizure

A seizure occurs when the electrical activity of the brain becomes irregular. When the electrical activity is severely irregular, the result may be a seizure. **A seizure is a medical emergency.** Seizures may be caused by either an acute or chronic condition such as epilepsy.

Risk Factors for Seizures:

- Head trauma
- Infections of the brain or spinal cord
- Epilepsy
- Stroke
- Drug use or withdrawal
- Hypoglycemia (Low Blood Sugar)
- Heat Stroke
- Fever in infants

Often before a seizure occurs, the victim may feel an aura, which is an unusual sensation that typically precedes seizures. Auras may come in many forms; often if the person is epileptic, they may be aware that a seizure is imminent and may tell others or sit or lie down to prevent injury.

10.2.1 Recognition

Typically seizures usually last no more than three minutes. Some common occurrences during a seizure include stopped or irregular breathing, body rigidity or convulsing, defecation, urination, and drooling.



Figure 10.2: Random, uncontrolled electrical activity in the brain causes seizures.

10.2.2 Treatment

Seeing a seizure may be a frightening experience which may cause you hesitation to act to aid the victim. However, it is very easy to care for the victim. **Never** attempt to hold them in any way to stop their seizure - the victim is unaware that it is occurring and is unable to control it. Attempting to restrain an individual having a seizure may result in broken bones. Also, **do not** attempt to stick anything into the victim's mouth. The victim's tongue will not cause them to choke, and sticking something in their mouth can cause further injury or death.

NEVER try to restrain the seizure. NEVER put anything in the mouth.

Care for Seizures:

1. Call EMS or have someone call for you
2. Move anything the victim can injure themselves with away from the victim such as chairs or other objects
3. Gently support the victim's head to prevent it from hitting the ground
4. Request that all bystanders move away (persons having a seizure are often embarrassed after their seizure)
5. After the seizure has ended, roll the victim into the recovery position **but only if you do not suspect a spinal injury**

After the seizure, the victim will slowly "awaken." Ensure that bystanders are away and offer reassurance for the victim. Victims who have a seizure in public are often self-conscious about their condition. The victim will be very tired after his seizure. Continue to reassure the victim until he or she is fully aware of the surroundings or until EMS arrives.

10.3 Poisoning

Specific information concerning treatment can be obtained from accompanying labels or written documentation such as the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet). Expert advice (poison control) and rapid transport to advanced medical care (EMS) is urgently needed in poisoning cases.

A poisoning victim may require basic life support at any moment; monitor the victim's ABCs throughout.

10.3.1 Absorption

The routes for external poisoning are direct contact with skin. Toxic chemicals. Poisonous plants. Stinging sea creatures. Also see anaphylactic shock.

The mechanism of entry into the body is absorption.

10.3.2 Inhalation

Inhalation injuries can come from a variety of sources including the inhalation of smoke, gasses, and chemicals. Get victim to fresh air. Use caution in giving rescue breathing to a person overcome by hazardous chemicals, as you may be contaminated in so doing.

10.3.3 Ingestion

Internal poisoning may not be immediately apparent. Symptoms, such as vomiting are sufficiently general that an immediate diagnosis cannot be made. The best indication of internal poisoning may be the presence of an open container of medication or toxic household chemicals. Check the label for specific first aid instructions for that specific poison.

Call for help immediately as advanced medical care will be required. If possible contact a poison control center and provide information about the suspected poison. Depending on the type of poison, the poison control center may suggest additional first aid measures pending the arrival of emergency medical technicians. These might include dilution with water or milk, administration of syrup of ipecac or activated charcoal, or the use of other common household products as improvised emergency antidotes. *Do not apply such measures without the benefit of expert advice or the advice from labelling or an MSDS.*

Appropriate first aid measures vary depending on the type of poison. Induced vomiting may do more harm than good, because the poison may harm the alimentary canal or esophagus. Vomit may also block the airway. However, induced vomiting may be necessary with some poisons to save the victim's life.

10.3.4 Injection

Injected substances are usually drugs; drug overdose is a serious medical emergency. Even without overdosing, contact with EMS is advisable.

Chapter 11

Advanced Topics

11.1 Wilderness First Aid

Wilderness first aid is the practice of first aid where definitive care is more than one hour away, and often days to weeks away. The practice of wilderness first aid is defined by difficult victim access, limited equipment, and environmental extremes.

11.1.1 Animal bites

Know the venomous animals in your area. Animal bites by any mammal should be considered possible cases of rabies. Prophylactic rabies treatment is recommended in most cases. Treat for bleeding, and bandage the wound loosely.

Snakes

Many snake bites, even by venomous snakes, are not envenomed, and these can be treated as normal animal bites.

Croatilid (rattlesnake and pit-viper) venoms cause the bitten area to turn green or purple. Elapsid (coral and many other non-U.S. snakes) venoms cause swollen lymph nodes. If symptoms appear, they should be treated by compressing and cooling the bite and evacuating the victim, on a litter if possible. If a victim is unable to reach medical care within 30 minutes, a bandage, wrapped two to four inches above the bite, may help slow venom. The bandage should not cut off blood flow from a vein or artery. A good rule of thumb is to make the band loose enough that a finger can slip under it.

Spiders & Scorpions

The black widow spider, and some scorpions are dangerous - mostly to small children and elderly adults. Only the Sydney funnel-web spider of Australia is

frequently dangerous to adults, and it resides only within 100 miles of Sydney, Australia. Treatment is identical to that of a snake-bite.

Tick Removal

If a tick is found attached to the body, seek assistance from medical authorities for proper removal, or follow these guidelines.

1. Grasp the tick's mouthparts with a set of special tick tweezers - be very careful not to grab the body.
2. Pull the mouthparts straight back in the direction they entered the skin with even pressure
3. The mouthparts are quite difficult to remove, and are often very long; be patient and use steady, even pressure
4. Pull gently but firmly; if you pull with too much force, you will detach the mouthparts from the rest of the tick. If the mouthparts stay embedded in the skin, they can very easily kindle an infection
5. Do not use flame or substances such as nail polish remover or bug spray
6. If you *must*, use fingernails to grasp the tick's mouthparts
7. Wash the area and your hands thoroughly with soap and water once you've finished



Figure 11.1: A female (large) and male (small) tick.

11.2 Extended Assessment

11.2.1 Checking for underlying causes

While waiting for professional help to arrive with a patient who is sick or injured, you can check a number of things which may indicate the cause of an illness. This information should then be given to the ambulance crew or doctor to speed up their diagnosis. If you spot any of these signs, it is imperative to seek professional medical assistance, if you have not already done so. The key things

to look for can be summarized in the mnemonic *JACCOL*, which stands for:

J	aundice	Jaundice is a yellowing of the skin, and is most obvious under the eyelids in adults. To check, ask permission, and then gently peel back the patient's eyelid to observe the colour.
A	nemia	Anemia is the lack of iron in the blood, and it causes pallor also under the eyelids, but possible also around the gums. Look for this at the same time as jaundice.
C	yanosis	Cyanosis (cyan=blue) is the blue tinge that comes with lack of oxygen reaching the body tissues. This can be seen best on the lips and gums, and sometimes on extremities such as fingers.
C	lubbing	Clubbing is an indicator of an underlying body chemistry problem. The test for this is simple. Ask the patient to place the fingernails of their right and left index fingers together (flat against each other, facing the same direction). If you can see a gap (diamond shaped) between the fingers where the cuticle is, then everything is normal. If their fingernails and fingers form a flat interface, then medical advice should be sought.
O	edema	Oedema is a swelling, usually seen in the lower legs. You can tell oedaema from other types of swelling by gently pushing it with a finger. If your finger leaves a dent, then the swelling is likely oedaema.
L	ymph nodes	The lymph nodes are in your neck, and quite often become 'puffy' when a patient is ill. Look at the patient to see if they seem to be swelled up around the sides of the neck.

11.2.2 Additional tests for spinal injuries

There are some additional neurological tests that can be done, if you have the proper training, to help you assess whether the victim has a spinal injury.

11.3 Airway Management

Airway management is the process of ensuring that:

1. There is an open pathway between a patients lungs and the outside world, and
2. The lungs are safe from aspiration

11.3.1 Manual methods

Head tilt/Chin lift

The simplest (and most reliable) way of ensuring an open airway in an unconscious patient is to use a head tilt chin lift technique, thereby lifting the tongue from the back of the throat.

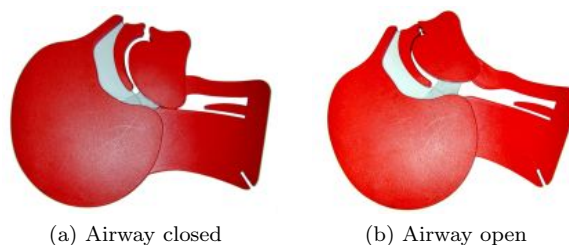


Figure 11.2: The head-tilt chin-lift is the most effective method of opening the airway.

Jaw thrust

ILCOR no longer advocates use of the jaw thrust, even for spinal-injured victims. Instead, continue use of the head-tilt chin-lift. If there is no risk of spinal injury, it is preferable to use the head-tilt chin-lift procedure which is easier to perform and maintain.

11.3.2 Oral Airways

There are a variety of artificial airways which can be used to keep a pathway between the lungs and mouth/nose.

An oropharyngeal airway can be used to prevent the tongue from blocking the airway. When these airways are inserted properly, the rescuer does not need to manually open the airway. Aspiration of blood, vomitus, and other fluids can still occur.

It is only possible to insert an oral airway when the patient is completely unconscious or does not have a gag reflex. If the patient begins to gag after inserting the oral airway, remove it immediately.

Use and contraindications

The correct size is chosen by measuring against the patient's head (from the earlobe to the corner of the



Figure 11.3: Oropharyngeal airways come in a variety of sizes; measure from the angle of the chin (or earlobe) to the corner of the mouth.

lips). The airway is then inserted into the patient's mouth upside down. Once contact is made with the back of the throat, the airway is rotated 180 degrees, allowing for easy insertion, and assuring that the tongue is secured. Measuring is very important, as the flared ends of the airway must rest securely against the lips to remain secure.

To remove the device, it is pulled out following the curvature of the tongue; no rotation is necessary.

The airway does not remove the need for the recovery position: it does not prevent suffocation by liquids (blood, saliva, food, cerebrospinal fluid) or the closing of the glottis.

The main risks of its use are:

- If the patient has a gag-reflex they may vomit
- When it is too large, it can close the glottis and thus close the airway
- Improper sizing can cause bleeding in the airway

11.3.3 Bag-Valve-Mask (BVM)

A **bag valve mask** (also known as a *BVM* or *Ambu bag*, which is a brand name) is a hand-held device used to provide ventilation to a victim who is not breathing. The device is self-filling with air, although additional O_2 can be added.

Use of the BVM to ventilate a victim is frequently called “bagging.” Bagging is regularly necessary when the victim's breathing is insufficient or has ceased completely. The BVM is used in order to manually provide mechanical ventilation in preference to mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (either direct or through an adjunct such as a pocket mask).

Components

The BVM consists of a flexible air chamber, about the size of an American football, attached to a face mask via a shutter valve. When the air chamber or “bag” is squeezed, the device forces air into the victim's lungs; when the bag is released, it self-inflates, drawing in ambient air or oxygen supplied from a tank. A bag valve mask can be used without being attached to an oxygen tank to provide air to the victim, but supplemental oxygen is recommended since it increases the amount of oxygen reaching the victim. Some devices also have a reservoir which can fill with oxygen while the patient is exhaling (a process which happens passively), in order to increase the amount of oxygen that can be delivered to the victim by about twofold. A BVM should have a valve which prevents the victim

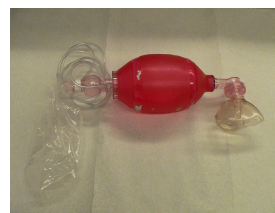


Figure 11.4: A bag-valve-mask.

from rebreathing exhaled air and which can connect to tubing to allow oxygen to be provided through the mask.

Bag valve masks come in different sizes to fit infants, children, and adults. Some types of the device are disposable, while others are designed to be cleaned, disinfected, and reused.

Use

The BVM directs the gas inside it via a one-way valve when compressed by a rescuer; the gas is then delivered through a mask and into the victim's airway and into the lungs. In order to be effective, a BVM must deliver between 700 and 1000 milliliters of air to the victim's lungs, but if oxygen is provided through the tubing and if the victim's chest rises with each inhalation (indicating that adequate amounts of air are reaching the lungs), 400 to 600 ml may still be adequate. Squeezing the bag once every 5 seconds for an adult or once every 3 seconds for an infant or child provides an adequate respiratory rate (12 respirations per minute in an adult and 20 per minute in a child or infant).

Ensure that the mask portion of the BVM is properly sealed around the patient's face (that is, to ensure proper "mask seal"); otherwise, air escapes from the mask and is not pushed into the lungs. In order to maintain this seal, some protocols use a method of ventilation involving two rescuers: one rescuer to hold the mask to the patient's face with both hands and ensure a mask seal, while the other squeezes the bag. However, to make better use of available rescuers, the BVM can be operated by a single rescuer who holds the mask to the victim's face with one hand (using a C-grip), and squeezes the bag with the other.

When using a BVM, as with other methods of ventilation, there is a risk of overinflating the lungs. This can lead to pressure damage to the lungs themselves, and can also cause air to enter the stomach, causing gastric distention which can make it more difficult to inflate the lungs and which can cause the victim to vomit. This can be avoided by care on behalf of the rescuer. Alternatively, some models of BVM are fitted with a valve which prevents overinflation, by blocking the outlet pipe when a certain pressure is reached.

11.3.4 Suction Devices

In the case of a victim who vomits or has other secretions in the airway, these techniques will not be enough. Suitably trained first aiders may use suction to clean out the airway, although this may not always be possible. An unconscious victim who is regurgitating stomach contents should be turned into the semi-prone position when there is no suction equipment available, as this allows (to a certain extent) the



Figure 11.5: Manual suction devices require specific training and certification.

drainage of fluids out of the mouth instead of down the trachea.

11.4 Oxygen Administration

11.4.1 Nasal Cannula

The **nasal cannula** is a thin tube with two small nozzles that protrude into the victim's nostrils. It can only provide oxygen at low flow rates: 2-6 liters per minute, delivering a concentration of 28-44%. Use of the nasal cannula at higher flow rates than 6 liters per minute can cause discomfort by drying the nasal passages and pain from the force of the oxygen.



Figure 11.6: Oxygen kit showing a demand valve and a constant flow mask.

11.4.2 Bag-Valve-Mask

The task of administering oxygen with bag-valve-mask (BVM) is not very demanding, and requires only one hand to squeeze the bag and one to maintain a good seal with the mask. Thus, this task can advantageously be achieved by one rescuer, who will then keep their mind free and, being at the head of the victim, have a good view of the overall situation. The head of the victim can be secured between the knees of the BVM operator. The bag-valve-mask (BVM) is used for victims in critical condition who require pure oxygen. A reservoir bag is attached to a central cylindrical bag, attached to a valved mask that administers 100% concentration oxygen at 8-15LPM. The central bag is squeezed manually to ventilate the victim.

11.4.3 Non-rebreathing Mask

The **non-rebreathing mask** is utilized for patients with multiple trauma injuries, chronic airway limitation/chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, smoke inhalation, and carbon monoxide poisoning, or any other patient that requires high-flow oxygen, but does not require breathing assistance. It has an attached reservoir bag where oxygen fills in between breaths, and a valve that largely prevents the inhalation of room or exhaled air. This allows the administration of high concentrations of oxygen, between 80-100%. This device is set to 10-15 lpm, or at least enough to keep the reservoir inflated between breaths.

11.4.4 Pocket Mask

The **pocket mask** is a small device that can be carried on one's person. It is used for the same victims



Figure 11.7: A CPR pocket mask, with carrying case

that the BVM is indicated for, but instead of delivering breaths by squeezing a reservoir, the first aider must actually exhale into the mask. Pocket masks normally have one-way valves built into them to protect against cross-contamination. Many masks also have an oxygen intake built-in, allowing for administration of 50-60% oxygen.

11.5 Automated External Defibrillation

11.5.1 D for Defibrillation

Defibrillation is an essential part of resuscitation. Survival chances of a fibrillating victim (ventricular fibrillation or ventricular tachycardia) start at 90% if defibrillated immediately and decrease by 10% every minute. This is why it is crucial that EMS is called **immediately** when a victim is unconscious.

Defibrillation operations start by exposing the chest, and removing all metallic items (jewellery, nipple piercings, etc). Prior to the application of the defibrillation pads, shaving the chest of exceptionally hairy victims is advised to increase conductivity to the chest and reduce the chance of burns, though shaving the chest should only be performed if a razor is readily available and will not delay defibrillation by more than 20 seconds. It is also crucial that you remove any patches (especially medicine) on the person's chest *while wearing gloves* to prevent a fire or explosion from some patches.

Now turn on the defibrillator unless it automatically turns on once you open it. Most AED units will give clear voice instructions; follow the prompts. Once the chest is exposed, you are to place the electrodes: one on the left side, under the arm, and the other over the right breast. The location of pad placement is clearly depicted on each pad; they must go exactly as shown in the picture. Once connected, the defibrillator will automatically start monitoring the heart's electrical activity to determine whether a shock is appropriate. Some defibrillators require the user to press an analyze button before the machine will analyze the heart rhythm. The machine will clearly talk you through all steps of the process.

CPR must be stopped while the defibrillator is monitoring the victim's heart activity. In all cases, defibrillation has priority over CPR. Do not touch the victim or the AED - if you do, you could interfere with the analysis. If the AED advises a shock, the operator will say "I'm Clear, you're clear, we're all clear" while ensuring that the operator is not touching the victim or standing in a wet environment next to the victim that could conduct electricity through the rescuer. The AED operator is also making sure that all other people surrounding the victim are clear. The final "we are all clear" ensures a double check to ensure

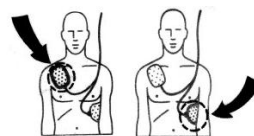


Figure 11.8: Electrode placement is crucial. One pad goes under the left arm; the other goes just below the left collarbone.

that everyone is away from the victim. If the victim is being given oxygen supplementation, the equipment must be removed at this point. The AED will shock the victim; the operator may be required to press a *shock* button. **Touching the victim is potentially fatal** when the shock is administered. After the shock has been delivered, it is safe to touch the victim; no electricity will remain in them. The defibrillator will advise you what to do next - usually you'll be told to begin chest compressions and rescue breaths again.

11.5.2 Operation

Defibrillators can also be used for monitoring and recording purposes; a different set of electrodes is available on some defibrillators for cardiac monitoring, though most defibrillators have the cardiac monitoring located within the pads. Because cardiac monitoring (ECG) is an advanced skill, it will not be covered in this section. Should fibrillation occur when the monitoring patches are on, the defibrillator will ask the operator to change patches, though most automatically analyze the patient through the two main patches every 2 minutes or whenever the analyze button is pressed. *Note:* Defibrillators are often quite graphically pictured in films and television shows. Actually, defibrillation might induce some contractions in the muscles of the patient, but in no case will the patient jump. In most television shows, the paddles are used which may make a rescuer feel apprehensive about defibrillating a patient if they believe that they have to gel the paddles then rub them together before shocking the patient. All AEDs used in the public access setting have two pre-gelled patches that are easily placed onto the patient's skin. This keeps the rescuer at a further distance from the patient during the shocking and enables the patches to stay on continuously during the resuscitation efforts.



Figure 11.9: AEDs are being deployed in public places including the Amsterdam airport.

11.6 Basic Triage

Triage is a system used by of rationing limited medical resources when the number of injured needing care exceeds the resources available to perform care so as to treat those patients in most need of treatment who are able to benefit first. The term comes from the French word for *sort*.

11.6.1 Simple Triage And Evacuation (START)

START is a simple triage system that first aiders can learn to use with little training. Simple triage identifies which persons need advanced medical care. In

START, persons should be treated and evacuated as follows:

Deceased	Left where they fell, covered if necessary; note that in START a person is not “deceased” unless they are not breathing and an effort to reposition their airway has been unsuccessful.
Immediate or Priority 1 (red)	Evacuation by MEDEVAC if available or ambulance as they need advanced medical care at once or within 1 hour. These people are in critical condition and would die without immediate assistance.
Delayed or Priority 2 (yellow)	Medical evacuation delayed until all immediate persons have been transported. These people are in stable condition but require medical assistance.
Minor or Priority 3 (green)	Not evacuated until all immediate and delayed persons have been evacuated. These will not need advanced medical care for at least several hours. Continue to re-triage in case their condition worsens. These people are ambulatory, and may only require bandages and antiseptic.

The image shows a standard triage tag used in emergency medical services. It is divided into several sections:

- Personal Property Receipt:** Includes a barcode and a unique ID number (e.g., 413730).
- Evidence Tag:** Another barcode and ID number.
- Identification:** A field for the patient's name.
- TRIAGE TAG:** A central section with a color-coded header (SLUDGE) and an 'AUTO TRIAGE' scale from 1 to 5.
- Diagram:** A human silhouette with various body parts labeled (Head, Neck, Chest, Abdomen, Pelvis, Limbs) and arrows indicating injury locations.
- VITAL SIGNS:** A table for recording vital signs (Temp, BP, Pulse, Respiration) and drug administration.
- EVIDENCE:** A section at the bottom with four categories: MORGUE (Fatalities/Non-Smoothing), IMMEDIATE (Life-Threatening Injury), DELAYED (Stable, Non-Life-Threatening), and MINOR (Walking/Wounded).

Figure 11.10: Typical triage tag for professional use.

Appendix A

Glossary

Abrasion A superficial wound in which the topmost layers of the skin are scraped off

AED Automated External Defibrillator

Airway The passages which transfer air from the outside environment to the lungs; the trachea, bronchi, bronchioles and alveoli

Artery A blood vessel carrying blood away from the heart; contains oxygen-rich, high-pressure blood in the systemic cardiorespiratory system

Avulsion A tearing away of a section of skin from the layers of tissue beneath it

Bystander Any person, trained or untrained, who assists in an emergency situation, but not as part of a duty of employment

Capillary The smallest blood vessels in the body; the skin is rife with capillaries

Causation Determination of whether the defendant's actions are causally linked to any harm

Circulation The movement of blood throughout the body; performed by the heart

Consciousness (level of) A state of awareness or lack thereof

Consent A legal condition whereby a person can be said to have given consent based upon an appreciation and understanding of the facts and implications of an action

Cyanosis The bluish coloration of the skin due to the presence of de-oxygenated blood near the skin surface; occurs when the oxygen saturation of arterial blood falls below 85%

Defibrillation Delivering a therapeutic dose of electrical energy to the affected heart with a device called a defibrillator

Diabetes A disease causing an inability to regulate the level of sugar (glucose) in the blood

Distal The point on a limb furthest from its point of attachment to the body

Duty of care A legal obligation imposed on an individual requiring that they exercise a reasonable standard of care while performing any acts that could foreseeably harm others

EMS Emergency Medical System

History One of the 3 parts of a secondary survey

Hypoxia A condition in which insufficient oxygen reaches body tissue

Incision A clean cut caused by a sharp-edged object

Insulin A hormone that allows glucose to travel from the bloodstream into the cells

Laceration Irregular wounds caused by a blunt impact to soft tissue which lies over hard tissue; tearing of skin

Landmark The location of compressions; on the midline of the chest, even with the nipples

Liability A legal doctrine that makes a person responsible for the damage and loss caused by their acts and omissions regardless of culpability; the requirements to prove liability are *a*) a duty of care exists; *b*) the standard of care was breached; and *c*) causation exists

Myocardial infarction Myocardial Infarction: Heart attack; bleeding or blockage cuts off blood flow to part of the heart muscle

Nailbed The tissue under the nail; pinching the nail and observing the blood return to the nailbed is a good test of circulation at that location

Oedema (also edema) Swelling in the lower legs and ankles. Oedema is caused by a fluid build-up in the body.

Semi-prone (also Recovery position) A position which keeps the tongue from obstructing the airway and allows any fluids to drain from the mouth

Standard of care The degree of prudence and caution required of an individual who is under a duty of care; the requirements of the standard are closely dependent on circumstances

Proximal The point on a limb closest to its point of attachment to the body

Puncture A wound caused by an object puncturing the skin

Vein A blood vessel that carries blood toward the heart; most veins carry low-oxygen blood

Appendix B

Behind the Scenes

- Where do these treatment protocols come from?
- Who decides what CPR is?
- Why is there variation in standards - isn't one way of doing things better than the others?

This section is designed to lift the hood and show you how first aid standards are derived.

B.1 ILCOR

The International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR) was formed in 1992 to provide an opportunity for the major organizations in resuscitation to work together on CPR and ECC (Emergency Cardiovascular Care). The name was chosen in 1996 to be a deliberate play on words relating to the treatment of sick hearts - "*ill cor*" (*coeur* is French for *heart*).

ILCOR is composed of the American Heart Association (AHA), the European Resuscitation Council (ERC), the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSFC), the Australian and New Zealand Committee on Resuscitation, the Resuscitation Councils of Southern Africa (RCSA), and the Inter American Heart Foundation (IAHF).

B.1.1 Mission Statement

"To provide a consensus mechanism by which the international science and knowledge relevant to emergency cardiac care can be identified and reviewed. This consensus mechanism will be used to provide consistent international guidelines on emergency cardiac care for Basic Life Support (BLS), Paediatric Life Support (PLS) and Advanced Life Support (ALS). While the major focus will be upon treatment guidelines, the steering committee will also address the effectiveness of educational and training approaches and topics related to the

organisation and implementation of emergency cardiac care. The Committee will also encourage coordination of dates for guidelines development and conferences by various national resuscitation councils. These international guidelines will aim for a commonality supported by science for BLS, ALS and PLS.”

B.1.2 Objectives

- Provide a forum for discussion and for coordination of all aspects of cardiopulmonary and cerebral resuscitation worldwide
- Foster scientific research in areas of resuscitation where there is a lack of data or where there is controversy
- Provide for dissemination of information on training and education in resuscitation
- Provide a mechanism for collecting, reviewing and sharing international scientific data on resuscitation
- Produce as appropriate statements on specific issues related to resuscitation that reflect international consensus

B.1.3 Activities

ILCOR meets twice each year usually alternating between a venue in the United States and a venue elsewhere in the world. ILCOR produced the first International CPR Guidelines in 2000, and revised protocols in 2005 (published concurrently in the scientific journals *Resuscitation* and *Circulation*). A total of 281 experts completed 403 worksheets on 275 topics, reviewing more than 22000 published studies to produce the 2005 revision. The standard revisions cycle for resuscitation is five years. The last revision was in 2005, so the next will be in 2010.

Appendix C

Resources & Further Reading

C.1 Print Resources

Those resources marked with a ◀ are Canadian, or conform to standards used in Canada.

1. Wyatt, Jonathat, Robin Illingworth, Michael Clancy, Phillip T. Munro, Colin Robertson. *Oxford Handbook of Accident and Emergency Medicine*, 2005. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0198526237.
2. Lifesaving Society. *Canadian First Aid Manual, 2nd ed.*, 2006. Lifesaving Society, Toronto, ON. ISBN 0-9735660-5-1.◀
3. Lifesaving Society. *Award Guide: First Aid*, 2006. Lifesaving Society, Toronto, ON. ISBN 0-9690721-6-3.◀
4. Limmer, Daniel, Keith J. Karren, Brent Q. Hafen, John MacKay, Michalle MacKay. *Emergency Medical Responder*, 2005. Pearson Education Canada. ISBN 013127824X.◀
5. Limmer, Daniel, Michael F. O'Keefe. *Emergency Care, 10th ed.*, 2004. Pearson, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ. ISBN 013114233X.
6. St. John Ambulance. *First Aid: First on the scene*, 2000. St. John Ambulance, Ottawa, ON. ISBN 1-894070-20-8.◀
7. St. John Ambulance NS/PEI Council. *Marine First Aid Supplement*. St. John Ambulance, Halifax, NS.◀

C.2 External links

C.2.1 Journals

1. The 2005 standards from ILCOR in *Circulation*◀
2. The 2005 standards from ILCOR in *Resuscitation*◀
3. The 2005 standards from AHA in *Circulation*◀

C.2.2 First Aid Training Organizations

1. National Guidelines for First Aid Training in Occupational Settings
2. Mayo Clinic: First Aid & Self Care
3. Lifesaving Society CPR Update◀
4. American Heart Association CPR Update◀

C.2.3 Other

1. Tick removal section initially based on public domain text from the US military.
 - Lyme Disease Foundation recommends the same procedure.
 - Evaluation of Three Commercial Tick Removal Tools
2. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration First Responder National Standard Curriculum.
3. First Aid Basic
4. eMedicine Wilderness and Travel Medicine
5. eMedicine What to put in your medical Kit
6. Expedition Medical Kits
7. A free transparent reality simulation of the self-inflating manual resuscitator (Ambu bag)
8. How to use an EpiPen◀

Appendix D

Notes for First Aid Instructors

D.1 Education

The teaching of first aid is in itself a valuable safety measure. Educating even a few people in first aid improves the safety of everyone they come into contact with.

Teaching first aid also provides an opportunity for teaching safety, prevention and risk reduction measures at the same time, as part of the first aid curriculum.

A person trained in first aid is more motivated to avoid personal injury, because their first aid training gives them a greater appreciation of the potential serious consequences.

Last but not least, someone trained in first aid can be taught to appreciate the importance of safety, prevention and risk reduction. This makes them an ideal advocate for spreading safety awareness to others in their organization or family. This “peer to peer” education can be very valuable.

Appendix E

Disclaimers

E.1 Disclaimers specific to First Aid

The contributions to this Wikibook reflect the best knowledge and intentions of the many (and often anonymous) authors contributing to the textbook. Many parts of first aid involve the use of detailed knowledge, motor skills and attitudes which can only be developed through proper training and practice. The practice of first aid is very serious business and **prior training by a person trained in first aid instruction is strongly recommended.**

This Wikibook includes graphic images of injuries and conditions.

First Aid is a set of practices which are almost-continuously updated. As well, there may be some areas where experts disagree on correct policy. This may vary by level of training, geographic location and other factors. Wherever possible, this textbook will present the international consensus for Standard first aid. **Accepted practices change, and there is no implicit or explicit guarantee that this Wikibook is up-to-date, or contains protocols accepted currently in your region.**

This Wikibook contains basic guidelines for how to perform first aid. There is no replacement for hands-on training from a qualified instructor. First aid and CPR training varies from region to region. Whenever possible, this Wikibook will conform to international standards. Part of any hands-on training should be region-specific standards. For example, EMS is accessed by calling 911 in most of North America, but by calling 112 in Europe and 000 in Australia. There are many first aid training organizations throughout the world. Most areas have both corporations and non-profits which carry out training.

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