



Basic First Aid

How to assess the needs of someone who has been injured or is in physiological distress

BASIC first aid allows you to quickly determine a person's physical condition and the correct course of treatment, whether the distress is due to choking, heart attack, allergic reactions, drugs or alcohol or other medical emergencies. You should always seek professional medical help as soon as you are able. The following correct first aid procedures can be the difference between life and death:



things you need to look for.

- **Airway** – Does the person have an unobstructed airway?
- **Breathing** – Is the person breathing?
- **Circulation** – Does the person show a pulse at major pulse points (wrist, carotid artery, groin)?

3 Avoid moving the victim. Avoid moving the victim unless they are in immediate danger. Moving a victim will often make injuries worse, especially in the case of spinal cord injuries.

4 Call Emergency Services. Call for help or tell someone else (a specific person, if possible) to call for help as soon as possible. If you are the only

person on the scene, try to establish breathing before calling for help, and do not leave the victim alone for an extensive amount of time.

5 Determine responsiveness. If a person is unconscious, try to rouse them by gently shaking and speaking to them.

6 If the person remains unresponsive, carefully roll them onto their back and open his airway.

- Keep head and neck aligned.



- Carefully roll them onto their back while holding his head.
- Open the airway by lifting the chin.

7 Look, listen and feel for signs of breathing. Look for the victim's chest to rise and fall, listen for sounds of breathing (place your ear near the nose and mouth, and feel for breath on your cheek).

- If the victim is not breathing, see the section below.
- If the victim is breathing, but unconscious, roll them onto their side, keeping the head and neck aligned with the body. This will help drain the mouth and prevent the tongue or vomit from blocking the airway.

8 Check the victim's circulation. Look at the victim's colour and check their pulse (the carotid artery is a good option; it is located on either side of the neck, below the jawbone). If the victim does not have a pulse, start CPR.

9 Treat bleeding, shock, and other problems as needed. After you have established that the victim is breathing and has a pulse, your next priority should be to control any bleeding. Particularly in the case of trauma, you should take steps to control or prevent shock.

- **How to Stop Bleeding** – Control of bleeding is one of the most important things you can do to save a trauma victim. Use direct pressure on a wound before trying any other method of managing bleeding.
- **How to Treat Shock** – Shock, a loss of blood flow to the body, frequently follows physical and occasionally psychological trauma. A person in shock will frequently have cool, clammy skin, be agitated or have an

altered mental status, and have pale color to the skin around the face and lips. Untreated, shock can be fatal. Anyone who has suffered a severe injury or life-threatening situation is at risk for shock.

- **How to Treat a Burn** – Treat first and second degree burns by immersing or flushing with cool water (no ice). Don't use creams, butter or other ointments, and do not pop blisters. Third degree burns should be covered with a damp cloth. Remove clothing and jewelry from the burn, but do not try to remove charred clothing that is stuck to burns.

• **Treat a Concussion** – If the victim has suffered a blow to the head, look for signs of concussion. Common symptoms are: loss of consciousness following the injury, disorientation or memory impairment, vertigo, nausea, and lethargy.

• **How to Treat a Spinal Injury Victim** – If you suspect a spinal injury, it is especially critical that you not move the victim's head, neck or back (unless they are in immediate danger). You also need to take special care when performing rescue breathing or CPR.

10 Stay with the victim until help arrives. Try to be a calming presence for the victim until assistance can arrive.