

## **First Aid**

First aid refers to medical attention that is usually administered immediately after an injury occurs and at the location where it happened. It often involves a one-time, short-term treatment and requires little technology or training to provide. First aid can include actions such as cleaning minor cuts, scrapes, or scratches; treating minor burns; applying bandages and dressings; using non-prescription medicines; draining blisters; removing debris from the eyes; giving massages; and drinking fluids to relieve heat stress.

Accidents can happen anywhere and at any time. The initial response to an accident is crucial. First aid administered at the scene can significantly improve the victim's chances of survival and recovery. The right response is always better than an incorrect, quick one. Even an incorrect response is better than no response at all.

### **Unconscious Victim**

If the victim is unconscious, perform rescue breathing (explained later in this section). If the victim's heart has stopped beating, perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

### **Shock**

Shock often accompanies severe injury or emotional distress. The signs of shock include cold, clammy skin; pale face; chills; confusion; frequent nausea or vomiting; and shallow breathing.

Until emergency help arrives:

- Have the victim lie down with their legs elevated.
- Keep the victim covered to prevent chilling or loss of body heat.
- Give non-alcoholic fluids if the victim is able to swallow and has not sustained an abdominal injury.

### **Bleeding**

Until emergency help arrives, try to control bleeding. If possible, put on rubber or latex gloves before touching any blood. If gloves are not available, use a clean plastic bag to cover your hands. It is important to avoid direct contact with blood due to health risks.

- If finger or hand pressure is insufficient, place a clean cloth or bandage over the wound and hold it in place with a belt, bandage, necktie, or cloth strips.
- Take care not to cut off circulation to the rest of the limb.

- For injuries where a tie cannot be used (such as the groin, back, chest, head, or neck), use finger or hand pressure with a clean cloth or bandage.
- If the bleeding part is a limb and bones are intact, raise the limb higher than the body.
- If the injury is severe, treat for shock.

### **Tourniquet:**

As a last resort, a tourniquet may be used to stop bleeding. A tourniquet is a wide band placed just above the wound to stop blood flow completely. However, applying a tourniquet can cause permanent damage to tissues and nerves. Once applied, a tourniquet should only be removed by a physician. The victim should be taken to medical help immediately.

### **Burns and Scalds**

Until medical help arrives:

- Immerse the burned area in cool tap water or apply clean, cool, moist towels.
- Do not use ice, as it may cause further damage.
- Maintain this treatment until the pain or burning stops.
- Do not break any blisters that may form.
- Avoid using ointments, greases, or powders.

For severe or chemical burns:

- Keep the victim calm and treat for shock.
- Remove any clothing, unless it is stuck to the burn.
- For chemical burns, flush the skin with plenty of water, but only cover the burned area with a clean bandage if necessary.
- If the victim is conscious and able to swallow, give non-alcoholic fluids to drink.
- Get medical assistance immediately.

### **Spinal Injuries**

Special care must be taken when assisting a victim with a suspected spinal injury, as damage to the spinal cord is permanent.

- Do not move the victim unless there is imminent danger or it is necessary to establish breathing.
- Stabilize the victim's head, neck, and body to prevent movement.
- Any movement could result in paralysis or death.

- If movement is necessary, keep the neck and torso as straight as possible, pulling the victim's body in a direction that maintains the spine's alignment.
- When rolling the victim to clear the airway or assess breathing, move the head, neck, and torso together to avoid twisting.

### **Rescue Breathing for an Adult**

When breathing stops or the victim's lips, tongue, and fingernails become blue, immediate help is needed. In doubt, always begin rescue breathing until professional help arrives. The following are the 10 steps taught by the American Red Cross for assisting an adult who has stopped breathing:

1. **Check for responsiveness:** Tap or gently shake the victim and shout, "Are you OK?"
2. **Call for help:** Shout, "Help!" Call for emergency assistance.
3. **Position the victim:** Roll the victim onto their back.
4. **Open the airway:** Tilt the head back and lift the chin. Clear the mouth and throat of obstructions.
5. **Check for breathing:** Look, listen, and feel for breathing for 3-5 seconds.
6. **Give two full breaths:** Pinch the nose shut, seal your lips around the victim's mouth, and give two breaths, each lasting one to one and a half seconds.
7. **Check for a pulse:** Feel for a pulse at the neck for 5-10 seconds.
8. **Call for emergency help:** Have someone phone for an ambulance.
9. **Continue rescue breathing:** If no pulse, keep the head tilted, pinch the nose, and give one full breath every 5 seconds.
10. **Recheck the pulse every minute:** If a pulse is present but the victim is not breathing, continue rescue breathing.

### **Choking**

Choking occurs when food or a foreign object obstructs the airway. For a victim who cannot speak or cough forcefully, follow these steps:

For adults and children over one year old:

1. **Ask, "Are you choking?"**
2. **Call for help:** If the victim cannot cough, speak, breathe, or is making high-pitched noises, shout for assistance.
3. **Phone emergency services:** Have someone call an ambulance.
4. **Perform abdominal thrusts:**

- Wrap your arms around the victim's waist.
  - Make a fist and place the thumb side against the abdomen just above the navel.
  - Grasp the fist with the other hand and perform quick, upward thrusts.
5. **Repeat until the object is expelled or the victim begins to breathe.** If the victim loses consciousness, gently lower them to the ground.
  6. **Perform a finger sweep:** If the victim is unconscious, sweep the object from the mouth with your finger.
  7. **Open the airway:** Tilt the head back and lift the chin.
  8. **Give two full breaths:** Pinch the nose shut, seal lips around the mouth, and give two breaths.
  9. **Repeat abdominal thrusts:** Continue to perform abdominal thrusts until the object is removed or medical help arrives.

By following these steps, you can help stabilize a victim's condition until professional medical assistance arrives.

## **First Aid Quiz**

### **1. What is the primary goal of first aid?**

- a) To provide long-term medical care
- b) To provide immediate and short-term medical assistance until professional help arrives
- c) To diagnose injuries
- d) To administer medications

### **2. Which of the following should you NOT do for a burn victim?**

- a) Immerse the burned area in cool water
- b) Apply ice to the burn
- c) Keep the victim calm and treat for shock
- d) Do not break any blisters

### **3. What is the correct response when a victim is unconscious and not breathing?**

- a) Perform rescue breathing and check for a pulse
- b) Leave the victim lying on their back
- c) Perform abdominal thrusts
- d) Wait for the victim to wake up

### **4. How should you control bleeding in a victim?**

- a) Leave the wound open to let it heal naturally
- b) Apply pressure to the wound with a clean cloth or bandage
- c) Wash the wound with soap and water immediately
- d) Use ice to stop the bleeding

### **5. What should you do if a victim is in shock?**

- a) Have the victim sit up and move around
- b) Keep the victim lying down with legs elevated and warm
- c) Give the victim alcohol to drink
- d) Leave the victim exposed to the elements

### **6. How should you perform abdominal thrusts on a choking victim?**

- a) Place your arms around the victim's chest and squeeze
- b) Wrap your arms around the victim's waist, make a fist just above the navel, and perform quick upward thrusts
- c) Tap the victim on the back and wait for the object to come out
- d) Perform chest compressions

### **7. What should you do if a victim with a suspected spinal injury must be moved?**

- a) Move the victim as quickly as possible
- b) Keep the neck and torso straight and pull the victim from the feet or shoulders
- c) Roll the victim onto their side to check for breathing
- d) Perform abdominal thrusts to dislodge any blockage

**8. Which of the following actions is correct when performing rescue breathing on an adult?**

- a) Pinch the nose shut, seal your lips around the victim's mouth, and give two full breaths
- b) Give chest compressions before rescue breathing
- c) Check for a pulse after each breath
- d) Give 10 breaths every minute

**9. What is the purpose of a tourniquet?**

- a) To remove a foreign object from the airway
- b) To stop severe bleeding when all other methods have failed
- c) To treat shock
- d) To cool a burn injury

**10. If a choking victim becomes unconscious, what should you do next?**

- a) Perform abdominal thrusts until the object is cleared
- b) Lower the victim to the floor and perform CPR if necessary
- c) Leave the victim lying down
- d) Wait for the victim to regain consciousness

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**Answer Key:**

- 1. b) To provide immediate and short-term medical assistance until professional help arrives
- 2. b) Apply ice to the burn
- 3. a) Perform rescue breathing and check for a pulse
- 4. b) Apply pressure to the wound with a clean cloth or bandage
- 5. b) Keep the victim lying down with legs elevated and warm
- 6. b) Wrap your arms around the victim's waist, make a fist just above the navel, and perform quick upward thrusts
- 7. b) Keep the neck and torso straight and pull the victim from the feet or shoulders
- 8. a) Pinch the nose shut, seal your lips around the victim's mouth, and give two full breaths
- 9. b) To stop severe bleeding when all other methods have failed
- 10. b) Lower the victim to the floor and perform CPR if necessary

