

## FIRST AID ESSENTIALS

### Introduction

Accidents will happen - hundreds of them, every day. Sometimes people are seriously injured, and their lives and future health may depend on speedy and efficient first aid. Therefore the more people who know something about first aid the better.

First aid is a complicated subject. To be a useful first aider you must know your subject. Few people can spare much time to learn about it. Therefore, confine your attention to essentials, and really get to know them. Here are some ESSENTIAL POINTS:-

#### 1. How the Body Works

The body is made up of many millions of microscopical "bricks" - called cells. Like a motor-car engine, each cell requires fuel and oxygen to make it work. The food we eat provides the fuel, and the air we breathe, the oxygen. When the food has been "burnt" in oxygen, waste products (which include carbon dioxide gas) have to be removed from each cell, and ultimately from the body. No cell can live very long without oxygen, or tolerate a build up of carbon dioxide. Some brain cells die in 3 or 4 minutes under these conditions.

The blood acts as a transport system - like an internal waterway. But unlike Britain's canals, it is very important. It carries oxygen and food to all living cells in the body, and removes the waste products.

The blood collects its supply of oxygen from the lungs, and gives up its carbon dioxide to them. A regular supply of oxygen to, and elimination of carbon dioxide from, the body are dependent on adequate breathing.

From this you can understand how urgent it is to stop bleeding and assist breathing in many injured persons.

#### 2. How to Stop Bleeding

##### (i) Visible Bleeding

(a) Lay the patient down.

(b) Raise the bleeding part, if possible.



- (c) Press firmly over the bleeding area.

If there is a foreign body in the wound which you cannot easily remove, press round the edges of the wound.

(ii) Internal Bleeding

- (a) Rest the patient.
- (b) Reassure.
- (c) Get to hospital as quickly as possible.
- (d) Give nothing to drink.
- (e) Recognise by the following:-

Pale, cold, sweaty skin.

Faint feeling on sitting or standing.

Pulse fast and weak (Average adult rate = 72/minute).

Breathing fast and laboured (Average adult rate = 15-18/  
minute).

Thirst.

Restless anxiety.

Eventually - unconsciousness.

3. How to Help Breathing

- (i) Ensure air to breathe.

(ii) Ensure clear airway (from face to lungs). The tongue may fall back in an unconscious patient, so turn head to one side, or place patient in semi-prone position.

(iii) Ensure lung ventilation is maintained - Check by holding your face or back of hand in front of patient's mouth and nose.

If necessary begin artificial respiration AT ONCE - preferably by "mouth-to-mouth" or "mouth-to-nose" method.

4. How to Treat Broken Bones

Unstable pieces of broken bone can do serious damage to neighbouring parts of the body e.g. a fractured thigh bone can cause serious internal bleeding; and a fractured spine may lead to permanent paralysis.



Suspect a broken bone wherever force has been applied to the body. Then handle the injured part with great care. If you think the spine is broken, do not twist the back, and try to maintain the natural hollows.

A bang on the head can easily cause a fractured skull. Always suspect this if it has caused unconsciousness - even though only momentarily - and refer to a doctor.

One final word. Many people feel panicky when they see an accident. If you know your first aid, and rely on common sense, you will not panic, - and furthermore you may save a life.



1. ON BACK: TILT HEAD BACK AS FAR AS POSSIBLE: RAISE THE JAW.



2. PINCH VICTIM'S NOSE: KEEP HEAD BACK: BLOW UNTIL CHEST RISES.

#### RESCUE BREATHING

LAY VICTIM ON HIS BACK.

CLEAR HIS MOUTH AND THROAT.

TILT HIS HEAD BACK AS FAR AS POSSIBLE AND RAISE HIS JAW.

PINCH HIS NOSTRILS.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH.

COVER HIS MOUTH WITH YOURS AND BLOW WATCHING HIS CHEST RISE. (FORCEFULLY INTO ADULTS AND GENTLY INTO CHILDREN).

MOVE YOUR FACE AWAY FOR HIM TO BREATHE OUT. WATCH HIS CHEST FALL.

REPEAT YOUR FIRST FIVE TO TEN BREATHS AT A RAPID RATE. THEREAFTER TAKE ONE BREATH EVERY THREE TO FIVE SECONDS.

KEEP HIS HEAD BACK AS FAR AS POSSIBLE ALL THE TIME.

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