



FIRST AID BASICS

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – FIRST AID

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What is First Aid?

First aid is the initial care provided to an injured or ill person before professional medical help is available. It aims to preserve life, prevent the condition from worsening, and promote recovery.

Key Principles of First Aid

1. **Assess the Situation:** Ensure the scene is safe for you and the victim. Check for any hazards.
2. **Call for Help:** Contact emergency services if needed. Provide clear details about the situation and location.
3. **Provide Care:** Offer appropriate first aid based on the situation, while waiting for professional help to arrive.

Basic First Aid Procedures

1. Checking Responsiveness and Breathing

- **Responsiveness:** Gently tap the person and shout, “Are you okay?” If unresponsive, call emergency services immediately.
- **Breathing:** Check for normal breathing by looking at the chest, listening for breath sounds, and feeling for air on your cheek.

Action: If not breathing, start CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation).

2. Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

- **Chest Compressions:** Place your hands in the center of the chest and compress at least 2 inches deep at a rate of 100-120 compressions per minute.
- **Rescue Breaths:** After 30 compressions, give 2 rescue breaths if trained to do so. Tilt the head back, pinch the nose, cover the mouth with yours, and give a breath lasting about 1 second.



Note: Follow the latest guidelines from organizations like the American Heart Association (AHA) or your local equivalent.



3. Controlling Bleeding

- **Apply Pressure:** Use a clean cloth or bandage and apply firm, direct pressure to the wound. Elevate the injured area if possible.
- **Do Not Remove Objects:** If an object is embedded in a wound, do not remove it. Apply pressure around the object.

When to Seek Help: If bleeding does not stop or is severe, seek professional medical help immediately.

4. Treating Burns

- **Cool the Burn:** Place the burned area under cool (not cold) running water for at least 10 minutes. Avoid using ice.
- **Cover the Burn:** Use a clean, non-stick bandage or cloth to cover the burn. Do not apply ointments or creams.

Note: Seek medical help for severe burns or burns affecting large areas of the body.

5. Managing Fractures and Sprains

- **Immobilize the Area:** Avoid moving the injured area. Use a splint or a makeshift support to keep it stable.
- **Apply Ice:** Use an ice pack wrapped in a cloth to reduce swelling. Apply for 15-20 minutes every hour as needed.

When to Seek Help: For suspected fractures, severe pain, or if the injury doesn't improve, seek medical attention.

6. Treating Choking

- **For Adults and Children Over 1 Year Old:**
 - **Heimlich Maneuver:** Stand behind the person, place your arms around their waist, and give quick, inward and upward thrusts just above the navel.
- **For Infants Under 1 Year Old:**
 - **Back Blows and Chest Thrusts:** Hold the infant face down on your forearm and give 5 back blows between the shoulder blades. If choking continues, turn the infant face up and give 5 chest thrusts with 2 fingers.

Note: Seek medical help if choking persists or if you are unsure how to perform these techniques.

7. Recognizing and Treating Shock

- **Signs of Shock:** Pale or clammy skin, rapid breathing, weak pulse, confusion or dizziness.
- **Treatment:** Lay the person down and elevate their legs. Keep them warm and comfortable. Do not give them food or drink.

When to Seek Help: Always seek professional medical assistance if shock is suspected.



First Aid Kit Essentials

- Adhesive bandages
- Sterile gauze pads
- Adhesive tape
- Antiseptic wipes or solution
- Tweezers
- Scissors
- Disposable gloves
- CPR face shield or mask
- Thermometer
- Instant cold packs



Additional Resources

- **First Aid Courses:** Consider taking a certified first aid and CPR course to gain hands-on experience.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Familiarize yourself with local emergency numbers and medical facilities.

Important Reminders

- **Stay Calm:** Your calm demeanor will help the injured person stay calm as well.
- **Follow Up:** Always seek professional medical evaluation for any significant injuries or illnesses.

