



Home Care

First Aid Basics: Burns, Cuts and Scrapes, and Nosebleeds

Burns

To treat minor burns at home:

- If the skin is not broken, run cool water over the burn for several minutes.
- Cover the burn with a sterile bandage or clean cloth.
- Take an OTC pain reliever such as acetaminophen to relieve any swelling or pain.
- Do not place any creams, ointments or ice on the burned area.

Immediately seek emergency treatment for more serious burns.

Cuts and Scrapes

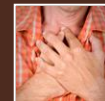
Most small cuts and scrapes can be treated at home. However, it is important to take steps to prevent infection or other complications from occurring. When treating minor wounds, keep the following in mind:

- Stop bleeding by applying pressure with a sterile gauze pad or clean cloth. If bleeding persists after several minutes of applying pressure, seek medical attention.
- Keep the wound clean by washing the area with mild



Issue Highlights

First Aid Basics: Poisoning, Shock, Choking, and Mouth-to-mouth



01

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01

First-aid Supplies



02

First Aid Basics: Poisoning, Shock, Choking and Mouth-to-mouth Resuscitation

At some time in your life, you may have to provide first aid to another individual who has suffered an injury. Here are some sample tips to help you provide emergency care.

Poisoning

Sometimes the source of a poisoning can be easily identified—an open bottle of medication or a spilled bottle of household cleaner—but signs are not always obvious. Look for the following signs or symptoms if you suspect a poisoning:

- Burns or redness around the mouth or lips
- Breath that smells like chemicals
- Burns, stains or strange odors on the person, his or her clothing, or the surrounding area
- Vomiting or difficulty breathing

If you believe someone has been poisoned, take the following steps:

1. Many poisonous products include instructions on the label that specify what to do if poisoning occurs. Follow those directions if you are positive it is the offending product.
2. If you cannot identify the poison or there are no instructions on the label, call the **Poison Hotline** at **800-222-1222**. Always keep this number near your telephone.
3. If the person is alert, give him or her a glass of water or milk to drink. The liquid will

slow the rate at which the poison is absorbed. If the person is weak, lethargic, unconscious or seizing, do not give them anything by mouth.

4. Avoid inducing vomiting unless instructed by the poison control operator. Using syrup of ipecac to induce vomiting was once a common method, but the American Academy of Pediatrics advises against it. In fact, you can no longer find syrup of ipecac in most pharmacies. This is to encourage people to first call the Poison Hotline.

5. Seek immediate medical attention. If you have identified the poison, take the container with you.

For any **suspected household pet poisoning**, if you cannot first reach your veterinarian, call the Animal Poison Control Center at **888-426-4435**.

Shock

Shock can result from a variety of injuries and circumstances. Several symptoms may be present in a person experiencing shock:

- Skin appears pale or gray and is cool
- Weak and rapid heartbeat, slow and shallow breathing, and reduced blood pressure
- Eyes lack shine and seem to stare; pupils may be dilated
- Individual may be conscious or unconscious; if conscious, they may faint or be very weak or confused
- Occasionally, individuals may become overly excited or anxious

First Aid Basics: Poisoning, Shock, Choking and Mouth-to-mouth Resuscitation

continued

(continued on page 2)

If you suspect an injured person is experiencing (or may begin to experience) shock, use the following techniques:

- Get the person to lie down on his or her back and elevate the feet higher than the head. Keep him or her from moving unnecessarily.
- Keep the person warm and comfortable. Loosen tight clothing and cover him or her with a blanket.
- Do not give the person anything to drink.
- If the individual is vomiting or bleeding from the mouth, place him or her on the side to prevent choking.
- Treat any injuries (bleeding, broken bones, etc.) appropriately.
- Immediately seek emergency medical attention.

Choking

The Heimlich maneuver is the best known method for removing an object from the airway of a person who is choking. Follow these steps to perform the Heimlich maneuver on yourself or someone else:

1. Stand behind the choking person and wrap your arms around his or her waist. Bend the person slightly forward.
2. Make a fist with one hand and place it slightly above the person's waist.
3. Grasp your fist with the other hand and press hard into the abdomen with a quick, upward thrust.

First-aid Supplies

Having a first-aid kit at home is the best way to be prepared for common injuries and home emergencies. Many drug stores and other retailers sell prepackaged first-aid kits. Or, if you prefer to build your own, be sure to include the following items: adhesive bandages in assorted shapes and sizes; alcohol wipes; gauze and gauze tape; antiseptic ointment; instant ice packs; sterile eye wash; elastic bandages; bandage scissors; tweezers; and pain relievers such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen. Place these and any other first-aid supplies you have into a secure, watertight box, and store it out of the reach of children.

4. Repeat this procedure until the object is expelled from the airway.

Mouth-to-mouth Resuscitation

Check for breathing by positioning the person on his or her back on a flat, firm surface. Place yourself next to the person's neck and shoulders. Extend the neck gently, opening the mouth by lifting the chin. To determine whether the person is breathing, place your ear above his or her mouth and listen for the sounds of exhaling and inhaling. Feel for air against your cheek and watch for motion in the chest. If the person is not breathing:

- Pinch the nostrils closed with your thumb and forefinger. Take a deep breath and make a seal around the person's mouth with your mouth. Breathe slowly into the person's mouth twice, checking to be sure his or her chest rises as you breathe. After the second breath, turn your head, listen for air and watch to see if the chest falls.
- Check to see if the person has a pulse. Place two fingers on the person's carotid artery—just to the side of the Adam's apple—to feel for movement. If the artery is pulsating, continue mouth-to-mouth, blowing a deep breath every 5 seconds (or 12 breaths every minute). If the artery is not pulsating, begin CPR.
- Continue to breathe for the person until he or she is breathing on his or her own or until help arrives.

To learn how to correctly administer CPR, contact your local Red Cross branch or visit www.redcross.org. ◇

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

First Aid Basics: Burns, Cuts and Scrapes, and Nosebleeds

soap and water and removing any dirt. Dry the area gently with a clean cloth, and cover with a protective bandage. Change the bandage at least once a day. If the wound becomes red, tender to the touch or oozes fluid, call the doctor.

- If a cut is more serious (large, deep, or rough on the edges) and bleeding will not stop, seek immediate medical attention.

Nosebleeds

A nosebleed is usually spontaneous bleeding from one or both nostrils that may result from trauma, dry air, allergies or even no apparent cause at all. To stop the flow of blood, try the following:

- Have the person sit or stand upright to slow the flow of blood. Do not tip the head back.
- Gently pinch the nose with your thumb and forefinger for 10 minutes, maintaining pressure. The person should breathe through his or her mouth.

If bleeding persists, seek immediate medical help. ◇

