

## Focus CPR First Aid Facts

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### ◆ How to Handle an Emergency

**Key Skill** ➔ Emergencies can seem overwhelming. You can do this. Start by taking a deep breath.

- If someone's been injured, be alert for danger to you.
- Call 911. When you call, know how many victims and how serious their injuries are.
- If the person is unconscious or does not respond, be ready to start CPR.

*Do NOT:*

- Do NOT wait to see if the person's condition improves before getting medical help.
  - Call 911 immediately.
- Do NOT leave the person alone unless absolutely necessary.
- Do NOT give the person food or drink.
- In general, do NOT place a pillow under the person's head. This can close the airway.

### ◆ Unconscious and Not Breathing

**Key Skill** ➔ Not certain the person is breathing? Start CPR!

- Call 911 (or send someone to call 911).
- Get the AED (Automated External Defibrillator) or send someone to get it.
- Perform Hands-only CPR: push hard and fast in the center of the chest.
- You can and should do CPR on a pregnant woman if she is in cardiac arrest. For pregnant patients, if you have help, have the other person push the uterus to the left.<sup>1</sup>

### ◆ Unconscious and Breathing

**Key Skill** ➔ If you're sure they're breathing, call 911 and await EMS.

- Keep the person's airway open by gently tilting back their head.

### ◆ Severe Allergic Reaction (Anaphylaxis)

**Key Skill** ➔ If the person has an Epi-pen, use it.

- Severe allergic reactions involve (i) trouble breathing or a swollen tongue/face, or (ii) fainting or unconsciousness and usually affect multiple parts of the body. In contrast, mild allergic reactions involve only localized swelling, stuffy nose, sneezing and itching.
- Call 911. If the person has an Epi-pen, have him use it. If he can't, use it for him.

### ◆ Major Bleeding

**Key Skill** ➔ Apply firm pressure. Don't let go. Use a tourniquet if needed.

- Apply firm direct pressure to the wound using a dressing (e.g. medical gauze or a towel). If the bleeding doesn't stop, apply additional dressings (don't remove the old one) and press harder.
- Call 911 if the bleeding is severe or won't stop.
- Apply a tourniquet. A tourniquet can be made from a belt or a strip of cloth at least 1.5" – 2" wide. Use a stick or something similar to tighten the tourniquet.

### ◆ Bleeding from the Mouth

**Key Skill** ➔ If you can reach the area in the mouth that's bleeding, apply pressure with dressings.

- If the bleeding is severe or won't stop, call 911 or go to the emergency department (ED).

<sup>1</sup> Copyright FocusCPR 2015 (Go to FocusCPR.com for more information. These facts are largely based upon the recommendations of the American Heart Association and the British Red Cross, as well as a few other high quality sources.)

## ◆ **Bleeding from the Nose**

**Key Skill** ➔ Pinch the nose firmly on both sides and lean forward.

- Apply constant pressure.
- If the bleeding continues, press harder.
- If the bleeding is severe or won't stop, call 911 or go to the ED.

## ◆ **Breathing Problem**

**Key Skill** ➔ Call 911. If the person has an inhaler, help them use it.

- Mild breathing problems can become more serious rapidly. For moderate or severe breathing problems, especially those that do not resolve with use of the inhaler, call 911. Do not drive the person to the emergency department.
- If they stop breathing and become unconscious, perform CPR.

## ◆ **Broken Arm**

**Key Skill** ➔ Have the person support the injured arm with their other arm.

- Use a piece of clothing or a large towel to immobilize the injured arm.
- Go to the ED.

## ◆ **Burns**

**Key Skill** ➔ Hold under cool running water or apply a cold, wet towel for at least 10 minutes.

- Quickly remove rings or other tight items from the burned area before it swells.
- Call 911 or go to the ED if the burn looks deep (the skin may be white or brown and dry), large (more than a tenth of the body), or is on the face, hands, or genitals.

## ◆ **Choking**

**Key Skill** ➔ If the person cannot breathe, get behind them and perform the Heimlich. Call 911.

- If the person cannot breathe, coughs without any sound, cannot make any sound, or makes the choking sign, perform the Heimlich maneuver. If a person can make sounds or cough loudly, allow them to cough and try to clear the blockage.
- Get behind the person, place one fist just above the belly button, grab your fist with your other hand and give quick upward thrusts.
- If the person becomes unconscious, call 911 (if you haven't already) and perform CPR.

## ◆ **Cuts and Scrapes**

**Key Skill** ➔ Clean with soap and water, apply antibiotic ointment, put on a bandaid.

- Stop the bleeding (with direct pressure), clean with soap and water, apply antibiotic ointment, put on a bandaid.
- If the bleeding doesn't stop with 15 minutes, consider going to the ER. Stitches may be needed if the wound is more than 1/4 in. deep, has jagged edges, won't stay closed with a bandaid, goes down to the fat, muscle, bone, or other deep structures, is over a joint, especially if the wound opens when the joint is moves, is on the hands or fingers, genitals, or face, is longer than 3/4 in.

## ◆ **Diabetes / Low Blood Sugar / Hypoglycemia**

**Key Skill** ➔ If they can swallow, give them a drink or snack high in sugar.

- Signs of a diabetic emergency: confusion, irritability, sleepiness, sweating, tremors or a seizure.
- Call 911.
- If the person can sit up and swallow, give them something sweet that contains sugar (not diet) to eat or drink (e.g. orange juice or regular soda).

## ◆ Dislocations

**Key Skill** → Don't move a dislocated joint.

- A dislocation is a traumatic injury in which a bone is pulled or forced out of a joint.
- Don't try to move a dislocated joint or force it back into place. This can cause damage.
- Splint the joint in the position you find it.
- Put ice on the injured joint to help reduce swelling.
- Call 911 / Go to the ED: A dislocation needs to be treated promptly at the ED.

## ◆ Eye: Chemical Splash

**Key Skill** → Rinse the eye with water for ten minutes.

- Use a work site eye-rinse station, if available. If not, use the shower or a faucet.
- Don't put anything except water or contact lens saline rinse in the eye.
- Go to the ED or call 911.

## ◆ Eye: Small Object<sup>ii</sup>

**Key Skill** → Rinse the eye with water. Do not rub the eye.

- Metal particles caused by machining or hammering present a high risk; go to the ED.
- Tiny objects, e.g. eyelashes and sand, usually will clear via blinking and tearing.
- To find the object: Have the person look up and down, and side to side. Pull down on the skin just below the lower eyelid. For the upper eyelid, place a cotton swab on the outside of the upper lid and gently flip it over the swab.
- Flush out the object with water. If it's on the eyelid use the corner of a damp cloth or moistened cotton swab. Don't touch the eye itself.
- A scratchy feeling may continue after removing a tiny object. This should go away within a day or so. If it doesn't, get medical help.

## ◆ Fainting

**Key Skill** → If they don't recover very rapidly, it may be something more serious; call 911.

- Help the person lie on the floor.
- They should recover very rapidly (less than a minute); if they don't something more serious may be going on, such as a seizure, heart attack or severe allergic reaction.
- If the person fell, look for injuries.

## ◆ Headache<sup>iiiiv</sup>

**Key Skill** → Most headaches are minor, and you can treat them with a pain reliever.

- Most headaches are minor, and can be treated with Tylenol or ibuprofen.
- Head pain may, however, signal a dangerous or serious medical problem. Call 911 or go to the ED for:
  - A sudden "thunderclap" headache, or a headache described as "the worst in my life", especially in an older adult.
  - A headache accompanied by symptoms of a stroke (see below)
  - A severe headache that follows a recent sore throat or respiratory infection
  - A headache following a head injury, fall or bump
  - A headache that gets worse over the course of a day or lasts for several days
- For a person suffering from a migraine headache:<sup>v</sup>
  - Drink water to address any dehydration
  - Turn off the lights; apply hot or cold compresses to the head or neck.

- Massage painful areas. Apply gentle pressure to the scalp or temples. Alleviate muscle tension with a shoulder or neck massage.
- Drink a caffeinated beverage. In small amounts, caffeine can relieve pain either alone or in combination with acetaminophen and aspirin.

## ◆ Heart Attack / Chest Pain

**Key Skill** → Don't delay; chest pain can be deadly; call 911.

- Call 911. Do not delay. Chest pain lasting more than 15 minutes must be evaluated at the ED immediately. A person experiencing a heart attack may die without immediate care.
- "Chest pain" includes any discomfort, pressure, tightness, or squeezing.
- People sometimes mistake the chest pain of a heart attack for indigestion or acid reflux.
- Have the person chew a regular aspirin (or four baby aspirin) unless they have a true allergy to aspirin, problems with serious internal bleeding or signs of a stroke (see below).
- If the person becomes unconscious, be prepared to perform CPR and use an AED.

## ◆ Heat Emergency

**Key Skill** → If they're hot and confused, cool them immediately; every minute counts.

- If they're hot and confused, passing out or having a seizure—you need to cool them immediately: get them into cool water (e.g. a pool), spray them with a hose or wrap them in a wet sheet. Stop active cooling once they're acting normally.
- Heatstroke can develop with little warning – people often cease sweating and can lose consciousness within minutes, so you'll need to react quickly.
- For all heat emergencies, if the person can swallow, have them drink sports drinks or water.

## ◆ Muscle Cramp / Spasm<sup>vi</sup>

**Key Skill** → Stretch and massage.

- Have the person stretch the cramped muscle; gently massage it to help it relax.
- For a calf cramp, have the person put their weight on the cramped leg and bend the knee slightly. If the person is unable to stand, have him or her sit on the floor or in a chair with the affected leg extended.
- The person can also pull the top of their foot toward their head while keeping the leg in a straightened position. This will also help ease a back thigh (hamstring) cramp.
- For a cramp in the front of the thigh (quadriceps), have the person pull their foot back toward their buttocks while holding onto a chair or firm surface.
- If the cramp is associated with fluid loss, fluid and electrolyte replacement is essential.
- Apply heat or cold. Use a warm towel or heating pad on tense or tight muscles. Alternatively, massaging the cramped muscle with ice may relieve pain.

## ◆ Opiate (Heroin) Overdose First Aid

**Key Skill** → If you have Narcan, use it. If they stop breathing, perform CPR.

- Call 911.
- If they are unconscious, try to wake them (rub their chest with your knuckles). If they don't awaken, and you're not sure they're breathing or they are blue:
  - begin rescue breathing or CPR (this will sometimes wake them up).
  - If you have Narcan (Naloxone) and know how to use it, do so.
- Snoring or gurgling is not 'normal' in someone who may have overdosed; don't let them 'sleep it off'. If you can't wake them immediately, call 911 and turn them on their side.

## ◆ **Smashed Fingers / Toes<sup>vii</sup>**

**Key Skill** → Apply an ice pack to reduce swelling.

- Ibuprofen or acetaminophen may help relieve discomfort.
- If the injury occurs at the tip and does not involve the joint or nail bed, you may not need to go to the ED. Even if the tip of your finger bone is broken, a splint may not be helpful. If the injury involves the joint or inner portions of the fingers or toes, go to the ED.
- If pain becomes severe and there is blood under the fingernail, you may wish to relieve the pressure by burning a hole in your fingernail. See the New York Times “Smashed Fingers” for instructions.

## ◆ **Splinters**

**Key Skill** → If the splinter continues to cause pain, turn red, or have pus, see your doctor.

- Wash with soap / water. Remove with tweezers or a needle cleaned with rubbing alcohol. Wash the skin again. If it's hard to remove, leave it for a day to see whether it comes out on its own.
- If there are multiple shards of glass in a hand or foot, wrap in a clean cloth and go to the ED. An x-ray can find shards that can lead to infection if not removed.
- If the splinter continues to cause pain, turn red, or have pus, see your doctor.

## ◆ **Stroke / Sudden Confusion or Weakness**

**Key Skill** → Call 911. Do NOT delay. The treatment of strokes is very time sensitive.

- Signs of a stroke include sudden weakness or drooping, especially on one side of the body, sudden confusion, trouble speaking, walking or seeing, sudden headache.
- Call 911. Do NOT delay. The treatment of strokes is very time sensitive. Call even if the other person does not believe they are having a stroke or does not want to go to the hospital.
- Note the time the symptoms began.
- Do NOT take aspirin for signs of a stroke.

## ◆ **Seizure**

**Key Skill** → If the person stops breathing, perform rescue breathing if trained to do so.

- Turn the person on their side, and protect their head from injury.
- Call 911 for any seizure that lasts more than 10 to 20 seconds or where the person is not rapidly conscious after the seizure has stopped.
- For a child who has Diastat prescribed, administer it promptly.
- If the person stops breathing, perform rescue breathing if trained to do so.
- If they are unconscious and not moving and you are not sure they are breathing, begin CPR.

## ◆ **Poisonous Spider / Insect**

**Key Skill** → Seek additional care when the symptoms spread to other parts of the body.

- The Northern Black Widow is the only indigenous poisonous spider in New England, and is rare.
- The bite or sting of a non-poisonous spider or insect causes localized redness or swelling. The bite of a poisonous spider or insect causes more widespread illness, including severe pain at the site of the bite, muscle cramps, fever, headache, vomiting, seizures or breathing problems.
- Clean with soap and water.
- Apply a bag of ice and water wrapped in a towel.

## ◆ Tick

**Key Skill** ➔ If flu-like symptoms or a large rash develops in the weeks afterward, see a doctor.

- Use tweezers to grasp the tick near its head or mouth and pull to remove it without crushing it. Petroleum jelly, fingernail polish, rubbing alcohol or a hot match aren't recommended.
- Place the tick in a container and freeze it.
- Using soap and water, wash your hands and the area around the tick bite.
- A small red bump may appear at the site. This is normal. Infected ticks usually do not spread an infection until after the tick has been attached for many hours.
- Check for a rash for about 4 weeks after the bite. If flu-like symptoms and/or a larger rash develop, especially with a bull's-eye pattern, it may indicate Lyme disease.

## ◆ Tooth Knocked Out

**Key Skill** ➔ Place the tooth in milk or water if milk isn't available.

- Apply pressure with gauze or a towel to stop bleeding at the empty tooth socket.

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<sup>i</sup> <http://journals.lww.com/anesthesia->

[analgesia/Fulltext/2014/05000/The\\_Society\\_for\\_Obstetric\\_Anesthesia\\_and.21.aspx](http://journals.lww.com/anesthesia-analgesia/Fulltext/2014/05000/The_Society_for_Obstetric_Anesthesia_and.21.aspx)

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/health/guides/injury/eye-emergencies/overview.html>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-head-pain/basics/art-20056639>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/health/guides/symptoms/headache/overview.html>

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/migraine-headache/in-depth/migraines/art-20047242>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/muscle-cramp/basics/lifestyle-home-remedies/con-20014594>

<sup>vii</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/health/guides/injury/smashed-fingers/overview.html>