

FIRST AID

First aid is the protection we can give the injured person before the doctor, nurse or hospital takes over control.

Each one of us, individually or collectively, can master first aid. We must, however, master it thoroughly since we cannot have any half-measures when life is at stake.

There are three basic principles in which the first aider must be trained:

(A) DIAGNOSIS

This is to decide, as far as possible, the nature of the injury or the disease. To do this, we must consider:

- (i) History of the accident. This one can get from the injured person himself or from people who have witnessed the accident.
- (ii) Symptoms which are the sensations which the injured person himself feels eg. pain, weakness, loss of sensation.
- (iii) Signs which the first aider can see by looking at the injured person eg. pallor, deformity or swelling.

(B) TREATMENT

This is aimed at saving a life, preventing the condition from becoming worse and promoting recovery. The vital things to do are:

STOP BLEEDING

PROVIDE FREE BREATHING

Also try to immobilise fractures and wounds but handle injured person gently all the time.

(C) TRANSPORT

The first aider's task is finished when he hands his patient over to a doctor or the hospital. He must do this as quickly as possible but at all times, obey the principles of the transport of injured people.

Some General First Aid Rules to Observe

The Conscious patient

The first aider can carefully and reasonably ask questions like:

- 1) Do you have any pain?
- 2) Are you sick or nauseous?
- 3) Do you have a headache?
- 4) Do you have a pain in the chest or down your left arm?
- 5) Is it difficult for you to breathe?
- 6) Can you move your arms and legs?
- 7) Is your mouth dry and are you thirsty?
- 8) Have you been drinking alcoholic beverages?
- 9) Have you been taking any medicine?

The Unconscious patient

The first aider should:

- 1) Determine if the injured person is breathing.
- 2) Determine if there is a pulse or if the heart is beating.
- 3) Examine the head and neck for possible injuries, such as bumps or possible depressions of the skull and malalignment or position of the neck.
- 4) Examine the eyes to determine the condition and size of the pupils.
- 5) Smell the breathe to determine its nature eg., alcohol, acetone, poisons such as kerosene or gasoline, and others.
- 6) Observe the colour of skin as white, red, or blue. This will be discussed at some length later in connection with unconsciousness.
- 7) Observe the possible and severe internal injuries such as chest puncture and abdominal injury.

There are a number of general principles for giving protection to the injured. A person should:

- 1) Remember that he/she is a first aider.
- 2) Send for medical help and if necessary an ambulance.
- 3) Keep him/herself under control - calm if possible.
- 4) Do first things first - protect the most seriously injured, then the others.
- 5) Expect the worst - protect the condition.
- 6) Keep the injured quiet and comfortable.
 - (a) Keep injured in lying position unless other positions are best
 - (b) Don't let injured walk.
 - (c) Raise head, turn head or elevate head or feet if necessary to make injured comfortable.
- 7) Check for bleeding, breathing, poisoning, burns, fractures, and dislocations, and remember:
 - (a) Pain is an important indication.
 - (b) Talk to injured if conscious.
 - (c) Remove clothing if necessary.
 - (d) If injured is bleeding from ears, nose and mouth, suspect a head injury.
 - (e) If injured is unconscious or semi-conscious, suspect a head injury.
- 8) Keep injured warm - insulate from weather.
- 9) Never give food or water to the unconscious.
- 10) Give water, which is preferred for the injured over tea or coffee - never alcohol.
- 11) Keep onlookers away.
- 12) Improvise - don't waste time.
- 13) Loosen tight clothing.
- 14) Splint fractures and dislocations before moving.
- 15) Protect injured from vomitus and other secretions by turning head.
- 16) Never be in a hurry to move injured.
- 17) Reassure the injured - keep him/her reassured.

18) Not let injured see his/her injuries; shock may result or his/her condition may become more severe.

19) Not touch wounds with hands or mouth.

20) Notify parents, relatives or friends.

General directions for giving first aid.

Keep the injured person lying down



Do not give liquids to the unconscious



Control bleeding by pressing on the wound



Restart breathing with mouth to mouth artificial respiration



Dilute swallowed poisons



Keep broken bones from moving



Cover burns with thick layers of cloth



Keep heart attack cases quiet



Fainting: Keep head lower than heart



Cover eye injuries with gauze pad



ALWAYS CALL A DOCTOR