



First Aid Basics

American Heart Association

Creating partnerships between people with disabilities and the community



What is First Aid?

- First aid is the immediate care that you give someone with an illness or injury before someone with more advanced training arrives and takes over.
- First aid may help someone recover more completely or more quickly and may mean the difference between life and death
- Most of the time you'll give first aid for minor illnesses or injuries. You may also give first aid for a more serious illness or injury, such as a heart attack or major bleeding.





The First Aid Kit

- Contains supplies you might need in an emergency
- Not all kits contain the same supplies
- Keep the supplies in a sturdy, watertight container that is clearly labeled
- Know where the First Aid kit is at each worksite you are at
- Replace what you use
- Check the first aid kit on a monthly basis and restock any missing items



Deciding to Provide First Aid

- Some people may be required to perform First Aid while working
- If they are off-duty, they can choose whether or not to provide First Aid. However, MN has a law in place called the **Good Samaritan Law** (MN Statute 604A.01) which mandates the **duty to assist** as follows:
 - "A person at the scene of an emergency who knows that another person is exposed to or has suffered grave physical harm shall, to the extent that the person can do so without danger or peril to self or others, give reasonable assistance to the exposed person. Reasonable assistance may include obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from law enforcement or medical personnel. A person who violates this subdivision is guilty of a petty misdemeanor."
- The law also provides **general immunity from liability**:
 - "A person who, without compensation or the expectation of compensation, renders emergency care, advice, or assistance at the scene of an emergency or during transit to a location where professional medical care can be rendered, is not liable for any civil damages as a result of acts or omissions by that person in rendering the emergency care, advice, or assistance, unless the person acts in a willful and wanton or reckless manner in providing the care, advice, or assistance. This subdivision does not apply to a person rendering emergency care, advice, or assistance during the course of regular employment, and receiving compensation or expecting to receive compensation for rendering the care, advice, or assistance."



Asking to Give First Aid

- Before you provide First Aid, it's important to ask the ill or injured person if you may help
- Ask if you may help
 - If the person agrees, give First Aid
 - If the person refuses, phone 9-1-1 and stay with him/her until help arrives
 - If the person is confused or can't answer, assume the person wants help





When to Phone for Help

- Ask for help whenever:
 - Someone is seriously ill or injured
 - You are not sure what to do
- Examples of someone who is seriously ill or injured:
 - Does not respond to voice or touch
 - Has chest discomfort
 - Has signs of stroke
 - Has a problem breathing





Assessing the Scene

- **DANGER:** Look out for danger to you and the injured person
- **HELP:** Look for people who can help you and look for telephones
- **WHO:** Who's injured?
- **WHERE:** Where are they? The emergency response team will need to know your address, location in building, etc.





Finding the Problem

- Check the scene to be sure it is safe
- Tap the person and shout “Are you OK?”
- Check if the person is breathing
- Look for signs of injury such as bleeding, broken bones, burns or bites
- Look for medical information jewelry





Universal Precautions

- Treat everyone's bodily fluids as if it were infected
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** includes:
 - Gloves to protect your hands
 - Eye protection to protect your eyes from blood & other bodily fluids
 - Mask to protect you when you give rescue breaths





Handwashing

- Washing your hands well is one of the most important protections you have against infectious pathogens
- Before helping someone, always wash your hands using soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty
- After helping someone, always wash your hands using soap and water after taking off your gloves
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds





Exposure to Blood

- Bloodborne diseases are caused by germs
- A rescuer may catch a disease if germs in someone else's blood or body fluids enter the rescuer's body
- Rescuers should wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep from touching the injured person's blood or body fluids





Medical Emergencies





General Breathing Problems

- Is breathing very fast or slow
- Is having trouble with every breath
- Has noisy breathing
- Can only make sounds or speak no more than a few words at a time in between breaths





Helping with Breathing Problems

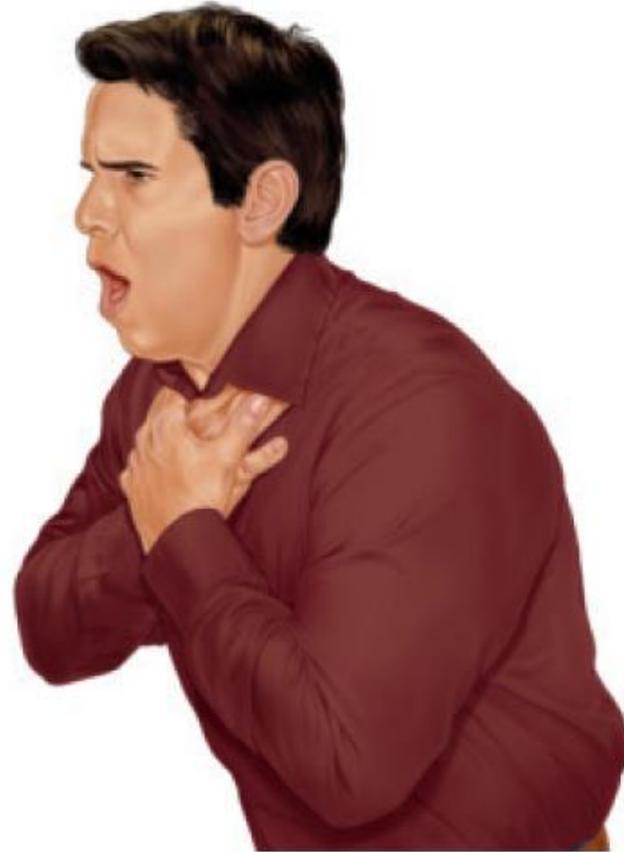
Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe.
2	Ask the person if she has medicine. If she needs her medicine but is too sick to get it herself, get it for her.
3	Ask the person if you have the right medicine.
4	Assemble and use the inhaler.

Step	Action
5	Phone the your emergency response number (or 911) if <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person has no medicine• The person does not get better after using her medicine• The person's breathing gets worse, the person has trouble speaking, or the person stops responding
6	Stay with the person until someone with more advanced training arrives and takes over.
7	See if the person needs CPR. If he does, give CPR. If you don't know how, give Hands-Only CPR.



Helping a Choking Adult

If someone is choking,
they might use the
universal choking sign





Helping a Choking Adult, Cont.

Step	Action
1	If you think someone is choking, ask, "Are you choking?" If he nods yes, tell him you are going to help.
2	Get behind him. Wrap your arms around him so that your hands are in front.
3	Make a fist with 1 hand.
4	Put the thumb side of your fist slightly above his belly button and well below the breastbone.
5	Grasp the fist with your other hand and give quick upward thrusts into his abdomen.
6	Give thrusts until the object is forced out and he can breathe, cough, or talk, or until he stops responding.





Signs of a Stroke

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking, or trouble understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination

Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe
2	Phone or ask someone to phone 911 and get the first aid kit and AED if available
3	Note the time when the signs of stroke first appeared
4	See if the person needs CPR. If he does, give CPR. If you don't know how, give Hands-only CPR.



Heart Attack

- Chest discomfort
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body
- Shortness of breath
- Other signs may include cold sweat, nausea, or light-headedness

Step	Action
1	Make sure the person stays calm and rests
2	Phone or have someone phone 911
3	Ask someone to get the first aid kit and AED if available
4	See if the person needs CPR. If he does, give CPR. If you don't know how, give Hands-only CPR



Shock

A person in shock may

- Feel weak, faint or dizzy
- Feel nauseous or thirsty
- Have pale or grayish skin
- Act restless, agitated or confused
- Be cold and clammy to the touch



Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe
2	Phone or send someone to phone 911
3	Have the person lie on her back
4	Cover the person in shock to keep her warm



Allergic Reactions

- People can be allergic to many things, including:
 - Foods such as eggs, nuts, and chocolate
 - Insect stings or bites, especially bee or wasp stings





Signs of Allergic Reactions

Mild Allergic Reactions	Severe Allergic Reactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stuffy nose, sneezing, and itching around the eyes• Itching of the skin• Raise, red rash on the skin (hives)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trouble breathing• Swelling of the tongue and face• Signs of shock





Using Epinephrine (Epi) Pens

- Will help someone with a severe allergic reaction breathe more easily
- Contains a small amount of medicine that can be injected through clothing
- Takes several minutes before the medicine starts to work
- Injection is given in the side of the thigh





Using Epinephrine (Epi) Pens, Cont.



A



B

Figure 15. Using an epinephrine pen. **A**, Taking off the safety cap. **B**, A rescuer uses the pen.



Diabetes and Low Blood Sugar

- Diabetes is a disease that affects levels of sugar in the blood. Too much or too little sugar causes problems. We're going to address low blood sugar which causes someone's behavior to change.





Signs of Low Blood Sugar

- Can appear quickly and may include
 - Change in behavior such as confusion or irritability
 - Sleepiness or not responding
 - Hunger, thirst, or weakness
 - Sweating, pale skin color
 - A seizure

Step	Action
1	If the person can sit up and swallow, give him something that contains sugar to eat or drink
2	Have him sit quietly or lie down
3	Phone or have someone phone 911



Injury Emergencies





Bleeding You Can See, Cont.

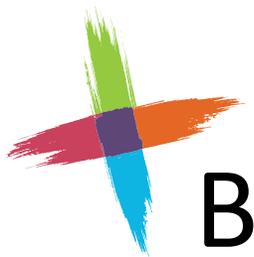
- When a large blood vessel is cut or torn, the person can lose a lot of blood within minutes
- You can stop most bleeding with pressure
- If the injured person can help you, ask them to put direct pressure on the wound while you put on your personal protective equipment (PPE)





Bleeding You Can See, Cont.

Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe. Get the first aid kit. Wear PPE.
2	Put a dressing on the wound. Apply direct pressure on the dressing . Use the flat part of your fingers or the palm of your hand.
3	If the bleeding does not stop, add more dressings on top of the first and press harder .
4	Keep pressure on the wound until it stops bleeding .
5	If you can't keep pressure on the wound, wrap a bandage firmly over the dressing to hold the dressing in place.



Bandaging

- A bandage is material used to protect or cover an injured body part
- A bandage may also help keep pressure on the wound

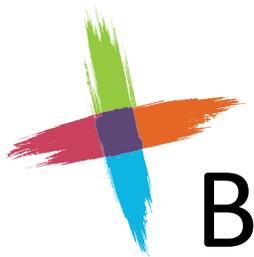
Placing a bandage over a dressing.





Burns

- Burns are injuries that can be caused by contact with heat, electricity, or chemicals
- Heat burns can be caused by contact with fire, a hot surface, a hot liquid, or steam
- If someone with a burn gets too cold, they can get hypothermia



Burns, Cont.

Small burns

Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe. Get the first aid kit. Wear PPE.
2	If the burn area is small, cool it immediately with cold, but not ice-cold, water. Run cold water on the burn until it doesn't hurt.
3	You may cover the burn with a dry, nonstick sterile or clean dressing.

Large burns

Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe. Get the first aid kit. Phone your emergency response number (or 911).
2	If the person is on fire, put the fire out.
3	Remove jewelry and clothing that is not stuck to the skin.
4	Cover the person with a dry blanket.
5	Check for signs of shock.



Electrical Injuries

- Electricity can burn the body on the inside and outside
- Electricity can stop breathing or cause a deadly abnormal heart rhythm
- Electricity may leave only small marks on the body





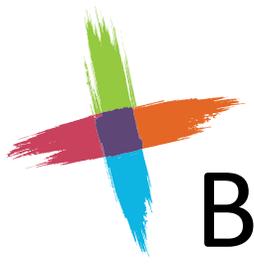
Electrical Injuries, Cont.

Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe. Get the first aid kit and AED. Wear PPE.
2	Phone or send someone to phone your emergency response number (or 911).
3	When it is safe to touch the injured person, see if he needs CPR. If he does, give CPR. If you don't know how, give Hands-Only CPR.
4	A healthcare provider should check everyone who has an electrical injury.



Environmental Emergencies





Bites and Stings

- Usually insect and spider bites and stings cause only mild pain, itching, and swelling at the bite
- Some insect bites can be serious and even fatal if:
 - The person bitten has a severe allergic reaction to the bite or sting
 - Poison is injected into the person





Bites and Stings, Cont.

Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe. Get the first aid kit. Wear PPE.
2	Phone or send someone to phone your emergency response number (or 911) and get the first aid kit if <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The person has signs of a severe allergic reaction• The person tells you that she has a severe allergic reaction to insect bites or stings. Get the person's epinephrine pen if she has one.
3	If a bee stung the person <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Look for the stinger. Bees are the only insects that may leave their stingers behind.• Scrape away the stinger and venom sac by using something with a dull edge, such as a credit card.

Step	Action
4	Wash the bite or sting area with a lot of running water (and soap, if possible).
5	Put a bag of ice and water wrapped in a towel or cloth over the bite or sting area for up to 20 minutes.
6	Watch the person for at least 30 minutes for signs of an allergic reaction.



Heat Cramps

- Most heat-related emergencies are caused by vigorous exercise
- Heat cramps are painful muscle spasms, most often in the calves, arms, stomach muscles, and back
- Signs of heat cramps include muscle cramps, sweating, and headache





Heat-Related Emergencies

- Heat Cramps
- Heat Exhaustion
- Heat Stroke





Heat Cramps, Cont.

Signs of heat cramps include muscle cramps, sweating, and headache.

Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe. Get the first aid kit. Wear PPE.
2	Have the person with heat cramps rest and cool off.
3	Have the person drink something that contains sugar and electrolytes, such as juice or a sports drink, or water if the others aren't available.





Heat Exhaustion

- Heat exhaustion is a serious condition that often turns into heat stroke
- It often occurs when someone exercises in the heat and sweats a lot
- **Signs of heat exhaustion** include sweating, nausea, dizziness, vomiting, muscle cramps, feeling faint, and fatigue





Heat Exhaustion, Cont.

Step	Action
1	Make sure the scene is safe. Get the first aid kit. Wear PPE.
2	Phone or ask someone to phone your emergency response number (or 911).
3	Have the person lie down in a cool place.
4	Remove as much of the person's clothing as possible.
5	Cool the person with a cool water spray.

Step	Action
6	If cool water spray is not available, place cool damp cloths on the neck, armpit, and groin area.
7	Have the person drink something that contains sugar and electrolytes, such as juice or a sports drink, or water if the others aren't available.



Heat Stroke

- Heat stroke is a very serious condition. It looks similar to heat exhaustion but is life threatening. You need to act quickly.
- The key signs of heat stroke: confusion, passing out, dizziness and seizures.
- Other signs may include nausea, vomiting, muscle cramps, feeling faint, and fatigue.

Step	Action
1	Make sure scene is safe. Get first aid kit and AED if available. Wear PPE.
2	Phone or ask someone to phone 911
3	Put the person in cool water, up to her neck if possible
4	See if the person needs CPR. If he does, give CPR. If you don't know how, give Hands-only CPR.



Cold-Related Emergencies

- **Frostbite**

- **Signs**

- Skin over the frostbitten area is white, waxy, or grayish-yellow
 - Area is cold and numb
 - Area is hard, and the skin doesn't move when you push it

- **Actions**

- Move the person to a warm place
 - Phone or ask someone to phone 911 and get the first aid kit
 - Remove tight clothing and jewelry from frostbitten part
 - Remove wet clothing and pat the body dry. Put dry clothes on the person and cover the person with a blanket
 - Do not try to thaw the frozen part if you think there may be a chance of refreezing





Cold-Related Emergencies, Cont.

- Hypothermia

- **Signs**

- Skin is cool to the touch
 - Shivering (stops when body temperature is very low)
 - Person may become confused or drowsy
 - Personality may change or the person may behave as if unconcerned about the condition
 - Muscles become stiff and rigid and skin becomes ice cold and blue

- As the body temperature continues to drop**

- The person stops responding
 - The person's breathing slows
 - It may be hard to tell when the person is breathing
 - The person may appear to be dead





Cold-Related Emergencies, Cont.

- Hypothermia

- Actions

- Get the person out of the cold
 - Remove wet clothing and pat the body dry. Put dry clothes on the person and cover the person with a blanket
 - Phone or ask someone to phone 911
 - Wrap the person up with anything you have-clothing, towels, newspapers, etc. Cover the head but not the face.
 - See if the person needs CPR. If so, give CPR. If you don't know how, give Hands-only CPR.



Follow-up After An Incident

- Contact your Supervisor
- Fill out an incident/accident report
- Contact client team members (home, families, case manager, guardian)





Resources Used

American Heart Association, Inc. eLearning Resources:

“CPR First Aid ELearning.” *CPR First Aid ELearning | AHA ELearning*,
www.OnlineAHA.org/.

“Workforce Training.” *American Heart Association*,
www.heart.org/heartquarters.

“Find a Course.” *American Heart Association*,
www.heart.org/eccclassconnector.

“AHA Instructors.” *American Heart Association*, www.heart.org/instructor.