



FIRST AID

THE IDEA

Most accidents happen at home, at school or in the community. Some injuries are minor, some are serious and can even cause death. Children are often the first people on the scene of an accident. Children need to know how to give effective First Aid. Children can teach others their First Aid skills. Learning about First Aid is interesting and practical and gives children vital and sometimes life-saving knowledge.

What is First Aid?

First Aid is the first treatment given to a person after an accident. This includes getting medical help when necessary.

The aim of First Aid is to:

- Keep the person alive.
- Help the person to get better.

For example: A man has cut his leg with an axe.

- Keep the man alive: Stop the serious bleeding from the cut.
- Help him to get better: Clean and cover the wound to prevent infection. Comfort the injured man and take him to the health centre.

How to handle an accident: The safe approach

1 Look around at the situation:

- Are you or any other people in danger?
- What was the cause of the accident?
- How many people are injured?

2 Remove the danger to yourself and the injured people (e.g. in a road accident you should ask someone to stop or control the traffic).

3 Ask someone to go for help.

4 Look at the injuries and decide what you can do to:

- Keep the person alive.
- Help the person to get better.

5 Behave calmly and confidently and reassure the injured people.



Where and how these activities have been used

First Aid has long been taught to children and was in many ways a Child-to-Child activity long before the Child-to-Child movement was formed. **Red Cross/Crescent** and **Scout/Guide** and other youth movements have always taught First Aid, and encouraged children within the movements to help each other. The Child-to-Child approach builds on these activities in two ways. It emphasises:

- All older children need to know very simple First Aid so that they can use it when necessary, and pass it on to others. Try some simple tests on older children in the community. How many know the First Aid for (a) a burn, and (b) a fall from a tree?
- Children need to pass on knowledge not just to others in their group, but also to older children in their community, including those who have not been to school.

Priorities for First Aid

In accidents where many people have been injured, the most seriously injured must be treated first. Remember that the noisiest person may not be the most seriously injured.

The **ABC rule** states the most important priorities to save lives and prevent permanent injury.

A Open the **Airway** (the passage from the mouth and nose to the lungs) and keep it open to allow the person to continue breathing. Check if anything is blocking the airway and remove it if possible.

B Check the **Breathing**. Place your ear next to the person's mouth and nose. Listen and feel and watch their chest and stomach to check whether they are breathing. If not, give Mouth-to-Mouth Ventilation.

C Check the **Circulation** of the blood by feeling for the heart beat. If there is no heart beat, give External Chest Compression which pumps the blood around the body.

This Activity Sheet does not teach the methods of Mouth-to-Mouth Ventilation and External Chest Compression. Ask a health worker or trained First Aider to teach these methods to the children.

The recovery position

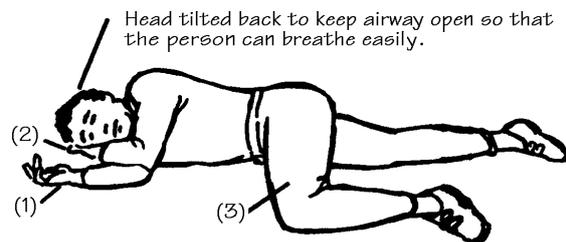
When a person is unconscious they seem to be asleep but you cannot wake them. Someone who is unconscious and breathing properly should be placed in the recovery position to keep their airway open. This makes sure that vomit and any other liquid will come out of the mouth so that they can breathe easily. Use the recovery position if you have to leave the injured person to go for help.

To put a person lying on his back into the recovery position:

- 1 Kneel beside the casualty.
- 2 Remove any spectacles.
- 3 Straighten the legs.

- 4 Place the near arm out at right angles to the body, elbow bent and palm uppermost (see drawing below) (1).
- 5 Bring the far arm across the chest. Hold hand, palm outwards against near cheek (2).
- 6 With your other hand, grasp far thigh. Pull the knee up, keeping the foot flat on the ground. Pull at the thigh to roll the person towards you onto their side (3).
- 7 Make sure that the chin is forward, the head tilted back and that the person can breathe freely.
- 8 If the person has broken bones, move them with great care. Take special care of their back and neck. Use a support like a rolled blanket instead of their arms and legs to keep their chest raised.
- 9 Get medical help.

The recovery position



Bleeding

You must take immediate action to stop the loss of blood. A person can die within three minutes from severe loss of blood.

First Aid

- 1 Rinse the wound thoroughly with water to clean out dirt and debris.
- 2 Immediately press the cut tightly for 5 minutes with your hand, or the injured person's hand, over a clean pad of cloth and **DO NOT LET GO!** If you cannot get a cloth, just use your hand. If available, use clean latex or rubber gloves to protect yourself from exposure to possible infection from someone else's blood.
- 3 Sit or lie the injured person down. Raise the injured part above the heart.
- 4 If the pad becomes soaked with blood,

DON'T take it off. Put another pad on top of the first one and bind it tightly with a cloth. It should not be too tight. You must be able to fit a finger between the cloth and the skin.

5 Send for the health worker immediately.

Shock

This happens when a person has been badly injured or is in great pain. In this state the person is losing blood and liquid from the body. Sometimes a person gets injured and bleeds inside the body without showing any blood outside. Any serious loss of blood or other liquids from the body can cause shock. People can also suffer from shock when they hear very bad news. Shock is a very serious condition and you need to be able to recognise the signs. When a person is in shock:

- the skin becomes pale or grey.
- the skin feels cold and clammy and sweats a lot.
- the heartbeat speeds up.
- the breathing speeds up and is quick and shallow.
- the person may seem confused.

First Aid

To put a person in the shock position:

- 1 Lay the person down.
- 2 Turn the head to one side.
- 3 If possible, raise the feet.
- 4 Loosen the clothing around the neck and waist.
- 5 Get medical help or carry the person to the health centre in that position.
- 6 Do not give the person anything to eat or drink.
- 7 If the person is likely to vomit or becomes unconscious, place them in the recovery position.

NEVER USE THE SHOCK POSITION IF A PERSON IS UNCONSCIOUS.



Hygiene rules

When giving First Aid remember your hygiene rules.

There are germs all around us: in the air, in the water, in the soil, on food, in faeces and in blood. You will have germs on you. It is important to stop germs from spreading. Some germs can cause very serious diseases. These hygiene rules will help protect you and the person you are looking after.

- Wash or wipe your hands before you help each person.
- Cover any open cuts and grazes on your hands to prevent the spread of germs.
- Wash your hands afterwards.

First Aid for common injuries and accidents

Wounds

This is an injury which breaks the skin and which allows blood to escape from the body and germs to enter it. If germs are allowed to settle in the wound, the wound may become infected.

First Aid

Most small wounds heal well if you do the following soon after the injury:

- Wash the wound with clean (or boiled) water.
- Wash the germs or any dirt away from the middle of the wound.
- Dry the surrounding area.
- Cover the wound and surrounding area with a very clean pad of cloth (not cotton wool or any fluffy material) and bandage it in place. If the wound is small you can apply antiseptic cream.

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- Wash the wound and put on a clean bandage twice a day.
- If the wound is serious, put on a bandage and take the person to the health worker.
- If the person has not been recently immunised against Tetanus, ask the health worker for an injection against this very serious disease (see Activity Sheet 6.4 **Immunisation**).

Objects that get stuck in wounds

- Don't try to remove the object.
- Bandage lightly over and around the object with a clean cloth, making sure that the wound is fully covered and protected.
- Take the person to the health worker. They may also need a Tetanus injection.

Infected wounds

If wounds are not kept clean and dry, germs grow and cause infection. An infected wound is hot, red, swollen and very painful. Pus (a thick yellow liquid) may come out of the wound. If this happens the wound must be covered with a very clean pad and the person must go to the health worker. Infected wounds must be treated by a health worker in order for them to heal and to prevent further illness.

Nose bleeds

First Aid

- Tell the injured person to sit up and breathe through the mouth.
- Pinch the soft part of the nose for at least 10 minutes.
- Tilt the head forward and downwards. Do **not** have the person lean back. This may cause blood to flow down the back of the throat, which tastes bad and may initiate gagging, coughing, or vomiting.
- If the bleeding doesn't stop take the person to the health worker.

Burns

Burns are very common in the home. Children and babies are often involved in accidents with burns. These are always very serious and help should be got from the health worker as soon as possible.



A burn is more serious if it covers a large area of the skin or is deep. Burns which cover a medium to large (i.e. 10 per cent) area of the body are a threat to life, especially for very young children. Serious (large) burns will need urgent medical help as the injured person may go into shock.

First Aid

- Remove the person from the source of heat. If a person's clothing is on fire, wrap them in a blanket or roll them on the ground to put out the fire.
- Cool the burnt area immediately using lots of clean water. If water isn't available, any cold, drinkable fluid can be used but **do not use ice, as it may cause the burn to take longer to heal.** Do not apply butter, grease, powder, or any other remedies to the burn, as these increase the risk of infection. It may take up to half an hour to cool the burnt area. If the burn is very large put the person into a bath of cold water.
- **For small burns** (less than the size of a large coin or stamp):
Keep the burnt area clean and dry and protect it with a loose bandage. If the burn is bigger than a large coin, show it to a health worker.
- **For large (serious) burns:**
Cover the burnt area with a dry and very clean piece of cloth and get medical help immediately.
- If necessary, treat for shock. If the person is unconscious, put them in the recovery position.

REMEMBER

- **Don't** break the blisters.
- **Don't** remove any clothing which is sticking to the burnt area.
- **Don't** put grease, oil or herbs on the burn.

Broken bones (Fractures)

A cracked or broken bone is called a fracture. There are two types of fracture:

- A **closed fracture** where you cannot see the bone.
- An **open fracture** where the bone has broken through the skin and can be seen.

It is important to keep the injured part still, in a fixed position, to prevent any further damage to the body. However, if the person is unconscious, they must **FIRST** be put into the recovery position.

First Aid

- If there is serious bleeding, treat this life-threatening problem first.
- If the person is unconscious, put them into the recovery position.
- If it is an open fracture, cover the wound with a clean cloth to prevent infection.
- **To stop the broken bone from moving:**
 - Place padding made from soft cloth around the broken bone.
 - Support the broken bone by bandaging it to a splint (see below) or a strong part of the body.
- Try to raise the limb with the broken bone to prevent the limb from swelling.
- Check for signs of shock and treat if necessary.
- Get medical help or transport the person to a health centre, making sure that the broken bone is well supported and cushioned.

Making splints

Splints help to stop the broken bone moving.

- The splint is made from something which is stiff or does not bend easily. This could be cardboard, many newspapers, thin bamboo matting, etc.
- Pad the splint with soft cloth.

- The splint must extend beyond the injured part on either side.
- Tie it securely with strips of cloth but not so tight as to cut off the blood supply to the injured part. (Never use string or wire!)



Poison

Many people, especially children, swallow dangerous poison by mistake. There are many different kinds of poison which have different effects on the body. In most cases they cause stomach pain and vomiting. Some of the most common poisons are: kerosene and petrol; chemicals used for farming, including DDT, insect killers; medicines (any kind when too much is taken by mistake); bleach and cleaning powders; iodine; poisonous leaves and berries.



First Aid

- Give the person plenty to drink, e.g. fresh water or milk. Do not give fizzy or alcoholic drinks.
- Do not try to make the person vomit.
- Seek the help of a health worker immediately.
- If the person is unconscious, put them immediately into the recovery position and do not try to give anything to drink.

Snake bites

Most snakes are not poisonous and only around 15 per cent of the 3000 or so different types of poisonous snakes that exist are regarded as posing a potential risk to humans. For example, many countries in Africa have up to 100 types of snakes. No more than 10 of these are poisonous. The health centre may have medicines to treat the different kinds of poisonous snake bites.

First Aid

- Lay the person down and keep them calm and still.
- Stop the poison spreading by keeping the bitten part still. Try to keep it lower than the heart.
- Wash the bite with water.
- If the person becomes unconscious, put them into the recovery position.
- Get the health worker to come.
- Try to find out what the snake looked like. If possible show it to the health worker.

Activities**Making a First Aid kit**

People often think that they cannot give First Aid without special First Aid equipment.

A BASIC FIRST AID KIT

12 triangular bandages*

Antiseptic cream

Safety pins

Cotton wool

A torch

Sticking plasters

A thermometer

* each made from a square metre of clean cloth cut in half.

This is not true. You can always give First Aid using the things you find around you.

It is however a good idea to have a First Aid kit prepared in the school or community. You can make this easily and cheaply.

To make bandages, the children can boil the cloth, dry it by hanging it up in the sun and parcel it in clean paper. They can make dressings by covering cotton wool with cloth to make a pad, and then sewing this onto strips of cloth. All the First Aid kit can be put into a clean, air-tight container.

The children can discuss how to use this equipment to practise all the First Aid treatments they have learned. For example, in how many ways can you use the triangular bandages? They can make pads to stop bleeding; to tie a support for a broken bone; to make a bandage for a wound ... and many others.

Learning First Aid skills

It is very important that the children practise the different First Aid treatments many times so that they feel confident and know what to do in a real accident. Make this practice as realistic as possible, using First Aid equipment and perhaps red paint for blood.

In learning the First Aid skills, children can:

- **Watch** someone demonstrate the different First Aid treatments one by one and practise on each one in turn with their friends.
- **Act out different accidents and give First Aid.** Other children can say whether they gave the correct treatment. They can pretend: to fall from a tree and break their leg; to cut their arm with a knife; to be knocked unconscious by a falling coconut; to be burnt by boiling water; and many more.
- **Discuss** when they would use the shock position and when they would use the recovery position. They can act out examples of each.
- **Learn how to feel a pulse** (heartbeat):
 - Place the tips of the fingers gently on the inside of the wrist below the thumb and move them until they can feel the pulse. This is the blood being pumped from the heart around the body.
 - Put the thumb and fingers gently

around the windpipe, then take the thumb away and feel the pulse through the fingers.

- **Count how many heart beats** they have in a minute. They can run around a field and then feel their pulse. What has happened? They can try finding and counting the pulse on their friends and adults. The children can make a chart to show their results.
- **Discuss how much blood** adults and children have in their bodies. An adult has about 4 litres of blood in their body. Small children obviously have less blood and so bleeding in them is more serious (e.g. an average sized child of 10 years would have about 3 litres). The children can measure 4 litres of water to see how much it looks like. If possible, mix in some red dye so it looks more like blood. If a person loses more than half a litre of blood it is dangerous. Try pouring half a litre of the red water on the ground to see how big a pool it makes.
- Make up **stories** to show the use of First Aid in different situations. Remember the rules about the Safe approach, the First Aid priorities and hygiene. Later children can act out these stories. The stories could be about:

- *The day my little sister burnt her hand.*
- *Three accidents on the day of the great storm.*
- *When baby Rajee drank kerosene.*
- *When my sister fell and got a deep cut on her arm from some sharp metal.*

- **Practise how to clean wounds**, washing the germs and dirt away from the centre of the wound. Put a drop of ink onto a plate. Try to remove the ink by cleaning from the centre outwards. Remember to fold the cloth to a fresh clean piece each time to wipe the ink. It should be possible to make the plate completely clean!
- Think of the bones which could be broken in the body, and design ways of supporting these bones. Children can collect materials to make splints and practise making and strapping on splints with their friends.

- **Make a stretcher.** A stretcher is used to carry an injured or ill person. It is made usually from very strong cloth and two long poles. A home-made stretcher can be made by rolling two strong poles into the sides of a blanket.

Finding out more

The children can:

- **Do a survey** to find out what kinds of accidents people in the community have had. How many have there been? Why did they happen? What kind of First Aid was given? Was this First Aid correct? Do they know how to do it better? They can make a chart to show the results of their survey.
- **Use the survey** to make a list of all the accidents which have happened in the community and discuss ways of preventing these accidents (see Activity Sheet 4.1 **Preventing Accidents**).
- **Find out the local treatment** for burns and wounds, and discuss with a health worker whether these are helpful or harmful.

Passing on First Aid skills

The children can share their important First Aid knowledge with other children, their families and communities in many ways:

- **Discuss the results of their survey** and decide on the messages and ways in which they can teach others about First Aid.
- **Make up plays, songs, posters and games** to teach about First Aid.
- **Design a First Aid test** which they and other children can take. If they don't pass the first time, they can practise and try again. Special badges can be given when children pass their First Aid test. A simpler test can be designed for the younger children. Each First Aider can always carry two clean triangular bandages with them.

ACTIVITY SHEET 4.3

CHILD-TO-CHILD TRUST

- **Establish a First Aid post** in the school or community. They should keep the First Aid kit always ready.
- **Organise an Open Day** in the school or community to pass on messages about accident prevention and First Aid.

Follow-up

The children can find out:

- How many of them remember the First Aid rules.
- How many of them have used their First Aid knowledge.
- How many other children and family members have learnt some First Aid.
- If the First Aid post is being maintained and used.

USING THIS SHEET

Children can help by using their First Aid knowledge and passing it on to others.

Teachers can include these activities in science, health and other lessons and can follow up later to support the children in their First Aid activities. **Leaders of youth groups**, such as **Scouts, Guides** and **Red Cross** can use these activities and introduce First Aid tests for badges. **Health workers** can also carry out these activities with children, as good First Aid treatment given by others helps them in their own work.

This Activity Sheet can be used together with 4.1 **Preventing Accidents** and 4.2 **Road Safety**.