

First Aid Encyclopedia Article

First Aid

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First Aid

At the outset of a serious illness or when an injury has been sustained, there are signs and symptoms that can be recognized and a first aid procedure initiated to prevent complications, pain, or discomfort. The ability of individuals who first render care to remain calm and respond appropriately can make a significant difference in the outcome for the victim.

First aid courses or training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation are offered by many local fire companies and organizations, such as the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross. Initial priorities can be remembered as A-B-C, that is, opening the Airway, then assessing Breathing and Circulation. Efforts should be made to stop any heavy bleeding by applying pressure to the affected area. If the injured individual is conscious, they should be reassured and made as comfortable as possible. Efforts should be made to prevent further injury, keeping in mind that anyone who has lost consciousness or complains of neck or back pain should not be moved. If you are in doubt about the appropriate action, call for help.

First aid supplies should be kept readily available and replenished promptly after use. In addition to being kept in a designated place in the home and the car, first aid supplies should be carried by campers, hikers, and bikers. A waterproof first aid kit should also be kept on all boats. Although preassembled first aid kits are widely available, items to be kept on hand should include: tweezers, elastic bandages, medical tape, fever thermometer, precut triangular bandages for slings or splints, safety pins, scissors, tongue depressors, antiseptic spray or cream, antidiarrheal drugs, antihistamine drugs, and assorted bandages and dressings. In the car or a boat, additional first aid supplies should include: flares, a clean folded sheet, a flashlight with extra batteries, a folded lightweight blanket, a large waterproof cover (tarp), and a tightly capped plastic bottle of water.

Individuals with special medical conditions or serious allergies should wear a Medic-Alert bracelet or necklace. For information on how to obtain one, call collect in the U. S.: (209)634-4917. Individuals who are hypersensitive to bee or insect stings should have special kit containing adrenaline, an antihistamine, and a hypodermic needle. These insect sting kits must be prescribed by and used under the direction of a physician.