



FIRST AID – BASICS



YOU MAY ONE DAY SAVE A LIFE

You may spend a lifetime not meeting anything worse than a few cuts and bruises, but **BE PREPARED**, as one day you may come across a serious accident, and you could be the only one about who can do something to save someone's life; it may even be one of your family or a friend on a simple day out. Knowledge is never lost.

FIRST AID is given by the **FIRST** person with some knowledge to happen at the scene of an accident. When experts arrive, step back; leave it to them to take over.

Arriving at the scene of an accident remember the letters **D R A B C** or **Dr. ABC** as we used to call him. The letters remind you how to proceed safely:

- D** Check for **DANGER** – see if it's safe to go to the patient. The last thing you need is another casualty – yourself.
- R** Check for **RESPONSE**. Quickly assess if the patient is conscious or unconscious. Talk to them. (See the word **COWS** further down the page.) If unconscious roll patient gently onto side – Recovery Position. Aids breathing and prevents patients swallowing tongue or their own vomit.

Call an Ambulance as quickly as possible – treat the quiet patients first.
You know the noisy ones are alive at least.

- A** Check **AIRWAY** to make sure it's clear. See if the tongue is too far back in the throat, or something obstructing the mouth or nose.
- B** Check if casualty is **BREATHING**. Look, chest rising for example or if glass (i.e. specs/mirror near nose) shows signs of steaming, listen for sound of breathing. If none give 5 quick breathes as in resuscitation.
- C** **CIRCULATION** – check the pulse, wrist, neck or wherever possible. If it is absent, attempt CPR - or mouth to mouth.

Remember also to:

Stop severe bleeding & Immobilise fractures

Checking for response – **COWS**. Talk to the patient; it is re-assuring for both of you.

- “Can you hear me?”
- “Open your eyes.”
- “What's your name?”
- “Squeeze my hand.”

Make patient **comfortable**, but try not to move him/her too much for fear of causing more damage to broken bones or fractures. Move neck and spine as little as possible.

If **danger** present, like a petrol leak from a car crash, and you have to move patient, be extremely careful of neck and spine, and use blanket or whatever is available to bind legs together for support. Lift patient by placing hands both under and over limbs and back – support the head and neck.

If an **object** has penetrated the skin, **DO NOT** remove it. It may have punctured the heart or an artery, and removing it will cause a greater loss of blood and possibly death.

There is a lot more to learn about First Aid – you may need it one day.