

Rock Lake United Church Camp Basic First Aid Procedures

This Outline will briefly discuss basic first aid. Included will be minor problems, emergency issues, and how to decide when to call 911.

Cuts and Scrapes

For minor cuts and scrapes first remove any debris and rinse the area with water or hydrogen peroxide, if available. Hold pressure until the bleeding stops. Once the area is clean, apply an antibacterial ointment and a bandage. Try to keep the area clean and dry.

For serious cuts that will not stop bleeding or have arterial bleeding (blood that squirts each time the heart beats) you need to hold pressure and visit the nearest emergency room (ER). If you are alone call 911. Hold pressure firmly and try to elevate the cut above the heart. If you cannot hold pressure firmly enough or can't reach the injured area, you can use a belt or rope as a tourniquet. Be careful not to cut off circulation to the area below the cut and only apply enough pressure to stop the bleeding.

Foreign Objects

Injuries involving foreign objects are fairly easy to care for. Simply remove the object and then follow the same care for a scrape or cut. However, if the object is embedded in the eyes, ears, nose, or stuck in the back of the throat, DO NOT attempt to remove it; then get to the nearest ER.

Burns

For minor burns, run the area under cool water, apply an antibacterial ointment, and cover with a bandage. You can also take an over-the-counter pain reliever such as Advil to help with the pain and swelling. If the burn covers a large area or something is melted to the skin, proceed to the ER. For chemical burns, consult the directions accompanying the product or call a poison control centre.

Insect Bites

For most insect bites, simply apply hydrocortisone cream to the affected area. You can also take an antihistamine such as Benadryl or Zyrtec to counter the itching and ibuprofen to help with the pain and swelling. For stings you can apply tobacco to the area to help draw out the pain. Be sure to remove the stinger if one is embedded in the skin. If swelling around the face and neck occurs or the patient becomes short of breath, they may be experiencing anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is life threatening and could result in the patient swelling so much that they cannot breathe. In this case, bring the injured person to the ER.

Animal Bites

If an animal bite is minor and from a pet, and therefore rabies is not suspected, care for it as you would a cut or scrape. However, if it is a cat bite you may want to visit a doctor, as cat bites become infected easily. If the animal is wild or you suspect rabies, go to the ER for testing and treatment. If the bite is significant and bleeding heavily, hold pressure on the wound and proceed to the ER.

Poison

Anytime a chemical or poison is ingested you should call the poison control centre. They will instruct you on how to treat the ingestion, and will also call back later to check up on you.

Eye Injury

If the injury is just a simple black eye, treat it with a cool compress and pain relievers. It will be better in a few days. However, if you have severe pain, bleeding on the eyeball itself, trouble with your vision, or something stuck in the eye, you should see a doctor immediately.

Head Trauma

If a person who has been hit in the head doesn't lose consciousness, knows what happened, is aware of where they are, and does not seem 'off', you can simply keep an eye on them. Watch the person to be sure they don't develop problems such as fainting, disorientation, liquid from the nose or ears, or vision problems. If they lose consciousness after the incident or exhibit any of the above symptoms, get to the ER immediately.

Fractures

Fractures require an ER visit to make sure bones are realigned properly. To reduce pain while en route to the ER, you can splint the bone with a stiff item like a ruler (or a stick if you are in a bind). You can also use a towel or sheet to make a splint. If a fracture is to the skull, DO NOT press on it and call 911 immediately.

Electrical Shock

A minor shock can be treated like a minor burn. However, if someone loses consciousness, isn't acting normal, or experiences problems with their vision, get them to the ER. In severe cases their heart could stop (at which point you would need to perform CPR). Note that if an electrocuted person is submerged in water, you should NOT attempt to enter the water as you could be electrocuted as well. If this is the case, call 911 immediately.

Frostbite, Hypothermia & Heat Stroke

If heat stroke is minor and there are no changes in consciousness, you can treat it by cooling off the affected person and administering ample water. However, someone experiencing altered consciousness should visit the ER. Similarly, a person experiencing mild hypothermia should be warmed up; however, if they aren't acting right they need to go to the hospital. All cases of frostbite should be seen at the ER, as the victim may need medication to restore circulation to the affected area (if circulation is not restored the person may need an amputation).