

Spinal Injury

FIRST AID FACT SHEET

How to provide first aid for a spinal injury

Spinal injury is damage to any part of the spinal cord. Injury to the spine interferes with the transmission of messages to and from the brain which may result in paralysis in the legs or arms. If the injury is very high up the spine, breathing can also be affected.

What to do

Unconscious casualty

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan (<https://stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/first-aid-information-and-resources/drsabcd-action-plan>).
2. Reassure the casualty.
3. If the casualty is breathing but remains unconscious, place them into the recovery whilst holding the head and spine in a neutral position to prevent twisting or bending during movement.
4. Support head and neck in the neutral position place hands on either side of the casualty's head to prevent twisting or bending the spine.
5. Maintain a clear and open airway.
6. Urgent medical aid. Call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.

Conscious casualty

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan (<https://stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/first-aid-information-and-resources/drsabcd-action-plan>).
2. Rest and reassure.
3. Loosen tight clothing.
4. Support and hold head and neck in a neutral position, place hands on either side of the casualty's head to prevent twisting or bending the spine.
5. Urgent medical aid. Call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.

Caused by

Traffic-related accidents.
Workplace related accidents.

Sporting accidents.
Falls or hit by a falling object.
Significant blows to the head.

Signs and symptoms

Pain at or below site of injury.
Tenderness or deformity.
Absent or altered sensation below site of injury e.g. tingling.
Loss of/or impaired movement below site of injury.
Nausea.
Headache or dizziness.
Breathing difficulties.
Altered conscious state.