

First Aid Notes

PGS

2025-01-31

Contents

Shock	1
Heat-induced illness	2
Swelling and cramps	2
Wounds and Dressings	3
Wound types	3
Dressings	3
What dressings to use	3

Shock

Any medical condition or injury can lead to shock. Shock is brought on by low circulating blood volume. Patient will have lowered blood pressure.

Signs and symptoms

- *Initial signs*
 - pale face, lips or fingernails
 - feeling faint or dizzy
 - cool, moist, sweaty skin
 - nausea
 - anxiety
- *Severe shock:*
 - feeling agitated
 - feeling thirsty
 - weak, rapid pulse
 - shallow, fast breathing
 - capillary refill more than 2 sec
 - blue face, earlobes, lips or fingernails (patient is very sick!)
 - decreasing level of consciousness

Treatment

- DRSABCD
- Help the patient lie down. Do not raise their legs.
- Reassure them.
- Manage severe bleeding, if any, then other injuries.
- Loosen tight clothing.
- Keep them warm using a blanket.
- Give them small amounts of cool water (if they're conscious, don't have abdominal injuries and won't need an operation soon).
- If they have difficulty breathing, put them in the recovery position.

Heat-induced illness

The aim is to cool down and rehydrate the patient.

If they don't improve within 10 minutes, call an ambulance.

Signs and symptoms

- patient is hot, breathless and sweaty (or dry - worse!)
- they can't continue their activity - they feel too weak
- high body temperature
- feeling faint or dizzy
- nausea, vomiting or diarrhoea
- pale skin and signs of shock setting in
- weak, rapid pulse
- feeling unsteady on their feet
- decreasing level of consciousness

Treatment

- Help patient to lie down in a cool, shaded area.
- Remove as much of their clothing as possible.
- Soak them with water.
- Apply ice packs to neck, armpits, groin.
- Fan them continuously.
- Keep spraying them with water or wiping them with a wet cloth.

Swelling and cramps

Hot conditions may result in the body becoming temporarily overheated. This can lead to heat-induced swelling of hands or feet.

Losing too much water and salt through sweating can cause heat cramps, especially in the legs and abdomen.

Treatment

Swelling

- Raise the affected limb.
- Get the patient to exercise it.

- Keep them cool.

Cramps

- Get the patient to stop and rest.
- Gently stretch the muscle that's affected.
- Massage the muscle if it helps reduce pain.
- Apply a cold pack.
- Get the patient to drink some water.

Wounds and Dressings

Wound types

Type of wound	Description	Caused by
Bruise	Visible discolouration on skin, with pain and swelling	Blow from something blunt
Incision or cut	Straight cut with edges that come together	Sharp object
Laceration	Wound with ragged edge, edges may not come together	Sharp, possibly jagged objects
Graze	Superficial scraping of skin, may have dirt in it	Scraping across a hard surface
Abrasion	Superficial or deep (possibly with pits) scraping of skin, may have dirt in it	Scraping across a hard surface
Skin tear	Wound with ragged edge	Severe force or thin, fragile skin

Dressings

Dressings can

- absorb blood and other fluids
- keep a wound clean
- help protect a wound from infection
- protect a wound from bumps and scrapes
- reduce pain

What dressings to use

Dry dressings

- cuts and lacerations
- closed blisters (with no skin loss)
- punctures

Moist (non-adherent) dressings

- grazes and abrasions
- open blisters (with skin loss)
- skin tears
- burns

Adhesive dressings

- minor wounds

Combine dressing

- large or deep wounds