



British Institute  
of Dental & Surgical  
Technologists

# CPD Article

ISSUE 12

Proud of our History, Looking Forward to the Future

This learning session has been judged as being equivalent to one hour of verifiable CPD. To claim your verifiable CPD you will need to answer the questions at the end of this article and submit them either by email to [secretary@bidst.org](mailto:secretary@bidst.org) or by post to the BIDST Membership Office 44-46 Wollaton Road, Beeston Nottingham NG9 2NR. You will also need to keep a copy of the article together with your feedback sheet and certificate for revalidation.

1.5hr   
Verifiable CPD

Provided by:



Ref No. 36/07/01

# General First Aid

## Poisoning

Poisons can be swallowed, absorbed through the skin, inhaled, splashed into the eyes or injected. They can include common household substances such as bleach, prescription drugs or even wild plants and fungi. Once in the body they can enter the bloodstream and be carried to organs and tissues. Being poisoned is potentially life threatening. Most cases of poisoning in the UK occur when a person has ingested a toxic substance.

If you think someone has swallowed a poisonous substance, call 999 to get immediate medical help.

The effects of poisoning depend on the substance swallowed but can include vomiting, loss of consciousness, pain or a burning sensation. If the person is unconscious, try to rouse them and encourage them to spit out any pills but do not put your fingers in their mouth. While waiting for help make sure, the person's airway is open and they are breathing OK. If they are breathing put them in the recovery position, preferably with their head down so any vomit can escape without being swallowed or inhaled. If they are unconscious,

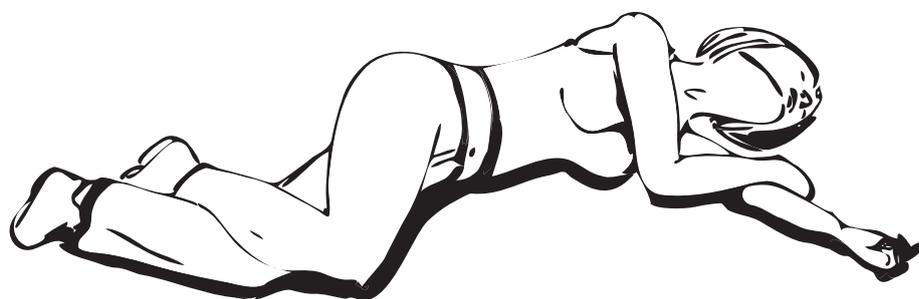


Figure 1: Recovery Position

perform CPR (mouth-to-mouth resuscitation) until they start breathing or medical help arrives. Find out what has been swallowed so you can tell the paramedic or doctor. Do not give the person anything to eat or drink unless a health professional advises you to. If there are no symptoms after a substance is swallowed, consult the poisons unit at your local hospital.

## The recovery position

If a casualty is unconscious but is breathing and has no other life-threatening conditions, they should be placed in the recovery position. Putting someone in the recovery position will ensure the airway remains clear and open. It also ensures that any vomit or fluid will not cause them to choke.

To place someone in the recovery position:

- place the person on their side so they are supported by one leg and one arm
- open their airway by tilting the head back and lifting the chin
- monitor their breathing and pulse continuously if injuries allow, turn the person onto their other side after 30 minutes

If you think, a person may have a spinal injury, do not move them, place your hands on either side of their face and gently lift their jaw with your fingertips to open the airway. Take care not to move their neck. If their breathing is or becomes noisy then place them in the recovery position.

## CPR



If a person is not breathing normally after an accident, you should call for an ambulance and then, if you are able to, start CPR (also known as mouth-to-mouth resuscitation) straight away. CPR, or cardio-pulmonary resuscitation, is a combination of rescue breaths and chest compressions to keep blood and oxygen circulating in the body.

For adults

1. Place your hands on the centre of the person's chest and, with the heel of your hand, press down (4-5cm) at a steady rate, slightly faster than one compression a second.
2. After every 30-chest compressions, give two breaths.
3. Pinch the person's nose. Seal your mouth over their mouth and blow steadily and firmly into their mouth. Check that their chest rises. Give two rescue breaths, each over one second.
4. Continue with cycles of 30 chest compressions and two rescue breaths until they begin to recover or emergency help arrives.

## Fractures

It can be difficult to tell if a person has a broken bone, or a joint or muscle injury. If in any doubt, treat

it as a broken bone. If the person is unconscious, has difficulty breathing, or is bleeding severely, these should be dealt with first. If the person is conscious, prevent any further injury by keeping them still until you get them safely to hospital. Assess the injury and decide the best way to get them to hospital. If it is a broken finger or arm, you may be able to drive them yourself without causing more harm. If it is a broken spine or leg, call for an ambulance.

- Support the limb: do not move the casualty, keep them in the position they were found. Support the injured part with anything you have handy, for example rolled up blankets or clothes.
- Get them to hospital: either by driving them yourself (if it is a minor fracture) or call for an ambulance.
- Look out for signs of shock: if the person is pale, cold and clammy, has a weak pulse and rapid shallow breathing, they are probably in shock.

If you suspect shock, and it is not a severe fracture that means you cannot move the person, lie the casualty down. Loosen any tight clothing and raise their legs above the level of their heart, if their injuries allow, by placing something suitable under their feet such as blankets or cushions.

Do not give them anything to eat or drink, as they may need a general anesthetic when they reach hospital.

## Treating shock

In the case of a serious accident, it is important to watch for signs of shock. Shock is a life-threatening condition that occurs when the circulatory system fails and, as a result, deprives the vital organs of oxygen. This is usually due to severe blood loss, but it can also happen following severe

burns, severe vomiting, a heart attack, bacterial infection or severe allergic reaction (anaphylactic shock). The type of shock described here is not the same thing as the emotional response of feeling shocked, which can also occur after an accident.

Signs of shock include:

- pale, cold, clammy skin
- sweating
- rapid, shallow breathing
- weakness and dizziness
- feeling sick and possibly vomiting
- thirst
- yawning
- sighing

**If you notice any signs of shock in a casualty, seek medical help immediately.**

- Dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.
- Treat any obvious injuries.
- Lay the person down if their injuries allow it, and raise and support their legs.
- Use a coat or blanket to keep them warm, but not smothered.
- Do not give them anything to eat or drink.
- Give lots of comfort and reassurance.
- Monitor the casualty. If they stop breathing, start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

## Heart attack

Heart attacks are one of the most common life-threatening heart conditions in the UK.

Symptoms of a heart attack include:

persistent central chest pain, often described as crushing or vice-like

- this pain can often spread up the neck and down one or both arms
- profuse sweating, skin cold to the touch
- ashen face and a blue tinge to the lips
- breathlessness and extreme gasping for air
- sudden fainting or dizziness
- rapid or weak pulse that may be irregular
- nausea and/or vomiting

If you think, a person is having or has had a heart attack make them as comfortable as possible and call 999 for an ambulance.

Sit the person down, if possible in the 'W' position. {Sitting up with the knees bent}. If they are conscious, reassure them and give them a 300mg aspirin tablet to chew slowly (unless there is any reason not to give them aspirin, such as they are under 16). If the person has any medication for angina, such as a spray or tablets, help them to take it. Monitor their vital signs until help arrives. If the person becomes unconscious, open their airway, check their breathing and, if it has stopped, start CPR.



## Stroke

FAST is the most important thing to remember when dealing with people who have had a stroke, the earlier they receive treatment the better. Call for emergency medical help straight away.

If you suspect a person has had a stroke use the FAST guide:

- Facial weakness: is the person unable to smile, are their eyes and/or mouth droopy?
- Arm weakness: is the person only able to raise one arm?
- Speech problems: is the person unable to speak clearly or understand you?
- Time to call 999 - Test all these signs and then call 999 for emergency help if you think a person has had a stroke.

## Anaphylactic shock

Anaphylactic shock is a severe allergic reaction that can occur after an insect sting or after eating certain foods, such as peanuts and shellfish. The reaction can be very fast, within seconds or minutes of contact with the allergen (the thing a person is allergic to). During a reaction, chemicals are released into the blood to widen the blood vessels causing blood pressure to fall. Air passages then narrow making it difficult for the person to breath. Their tongue and throat may also swell obstructing their airway.

If you suspect a person is having an anaphylactic shock, call 999 straight away.

Then check if the person is carrying any medication. Some people who know that they suffer from severe allergies may carry epinephrine on them. This is a kind of adrenaline and usually comes in the form of a pre-loaded syringe. You can either help the person administer their medication, or if trained, give it to them yourself. Make sure they are comfortable and able to breath as best they can while waiting for medical help to arrive. If they are conscious, sitting upright is normally the best position for them.

**Disclaimer:** This is a brief guide to actions that could be taken in an emergency, and should not replace the need to seek Medical Attention.

"To claim your verifiable CPD you will need to answer these questions and submit them either by email to [secretary@bidst.org](mailto:secretary@bidst.org) or by post to the BIDST Membership Office 44-46 Wollaton Road, Beeston Nottingham NG9 2NR. You will also need to keep a copy of the article together with your feedback sheet and certificate for revalidation".

1. Name the five ways which poison can enter our bodies?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

2. Fill in the missing steps for placing someone in the recovery position:

- 1) Place the person on their side so they are supported by one leg and one arm ?
- 2)
- 3) Monitor their breathing and pulse continuously?
- 4)

3. If you find a person is NOT breathing normally after an accident what should you do prior to starting CPR?

4. Complete the procedure If a person has a fracture and you suspect shock, and it is not a severe fracture that means you cannot move the person, lie the casualty down. What should you do next?

5. Name three signs of shock.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

6. Name three signs of a Heart Attack.

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

7. If a person is conscious after a Heart Attack what medication can you give them?

8. When talking about a stroke victim what does the term FAST stand for?

9. What is an Anaphylactic shock and what can cause it?

10. During a reaction from an Anaphylactic shock, chemicals are released into the blood to widen the blood vessels what are the consequences of this?

Name:

GDC Number

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone no: (in case of any queries)

Signed:

Date:



British Institute  
of Dental & Surgical  
Technologists

## British Institute of Dental & Surgical Technologists

44-46 Wollaton Road,  
Beeston,  
Nottingham  
NG9 2NR

Telephone: +44(0)115 968 3181  
Fax: +44(0)115 925 4800  
Website: [www.bidst.org](http://www.bidst.org)  
Email: [secretary@bidst.org](mailto:secretary@bidst.org)