



FIRST AID IN THE HOME

(This information does not replace a First Aid Course)

First aid is one of the most important skills you can learn. The information on this card covers a few common events around the home that may need first aid. To make sure you and your household know what to do in both emergency and simple first aid situations, enrol in a first aid course with St John Ambulance or Australian Red Cross.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS (write them in now)

Doctor:

Ambulance:

Poisons Information Centre: 131 126

Pharmacist:

DRABC Action Plan

St John Ambulance recommends using their DRABC Action Plan in assessing a situation that might be life-threatening:

D - Check for Danger

- to you, others and the casualty

R - Check Response

- is person conscious?

A - Check Airway

- is person's airway clear of objects?
- is person's airway open?

B - Check for Breathing

- is chest rising and falling?
- can you hear the person's breathing?
- can you feel their breath on your cheek?

C - Check for Circulation

- can you feel a pulse?
- can you see any obvious signs of life?

To learn how to do the above steps, and give first aid in general, do a first aid course with an approved organisation (see Contact).

MINOR CUTS & GRAZES

Treatment

- Rinse wound with sterile normal saline or clean water.
- Clean around wound by washing in water and wiping from edges out with a clean gauze pad.
- Apply a clean or sterile dressing, put pressure on the wound to stop bleeding and elevate the area.
- Your pharmacist can advise you on the best dressing for your wound.

See your doctor if

- A cut is longer than 1cm - it may need stitches.
- The wound is very dirty.
- There is severe bleeding.
- The wound becomes red, swollen and sore.

MINOR HEAD INJURY

Injuries to the scalp tend to bleed a lot. If the skin is not broken, bleeding under the scalp can form a large bruise or lump.

Treatment

- Wrap an ice pack in a damp towel and apply to the bruised area for 10-20 minutes to help reduce the swelling.
- Treat the scalp the same as a minor cut.
- Keep an eye on the person for 48 hours.

See a doctor urgently if the person

- Starts to vomit.
- Is drowsy, less alert, angry or passes out.
- Complains of a headache.

- Has blood or fluid leaking from their ears.
- Has black eyes or pupils that are unequal in size after the injury.

BURNS AND SCALDS

Treatment

- Carefully remove the person from the cause e.g. flames, steam.
- Hold burnt area under cold running water for at least 10 minutes. Repeat every five minutes for one hour or until pain/heat has gone.
- Remove clothing and jewellery from the burnt area unless it is sticking to the burn.
- Cover the burn with a sterile, non-stick dressing and bandage lightly (check with your pharmacist or doctor for advice on which dressing to use).

Note:

- Don't apply butter or creams to the burnt area – it can hold heat in the burn.
- Don't break blisters; if blisters are still present after two days, see your doctor.

Seek emergency medical help if the

- burn is larger than a 20 cent piece
- skin is broken, severely blistered or charred
- person is in severe pain
- burns are on hands, feet, face or genitals
- person with the burn is a baby

CHOKING

Treatment

- Encourage the person to relax and breathe deeply.
- Ask the person to cough – to get rid of the obstruction.
- If the person is unable to cough or breathe, place them on the floor on their side. Give four sharp blows between the shoulder blades. Hold infants or children face down across your lap.
- If this doesn't clear the air passage, try lateral chest thrusts and if breathing doesn't start again, begin resuscitation (you can learn how to do both of these methods at a first aid course).
- If the air passage doesn't clear, lie person on their side and call 000 for an ambulance.

Your Self Care Pharmacist

DAVID S. NOI TE PHARMACY
 DAVID S. NOI TE B.Pharm. M.P.S.
 701-703 Rathdowne Street
 NORTH CARLTON 3054
 9349-1522 FAX 9349-1115

Pharmacy Self Care has a strong commitment to providing current and reliable health information.
 The information in this card was current at time of printing.

POISONING

Treatment

Phone the Poisons Information Centre (131 126) and tell them what, how much and when the poison was swallowed. **DO NOT INDUCE VOMITING.**

If vomiting does occur, keep the person in a position where they're unlikely to inhale the vomit e.g. if a child – place them face down over your lap; if an adult – on their side.

Keep all

- Medicines, household and garden chemicals in a locked cupboard.
- Chemicals in their original containers.

HOME FIRST AID KIT

- sterilised cotton gauze swabs to clean wounds
- assorted sterile adhesive dressing strips
- stretch roller bandage
- triangular bandage
- rust-resistant scissors
- safety pins or clips
- rust-resistant tweezers
- isopropyl alcohol swabs
- sting neutraliser
- sterile saline solution
- cold pack or ice pack (hot/cold pack)
- pain reliever e.g. paracetamol
- antiseptic swabs and liquid

Further Reading

Read the latest editions of the following:
First Aid: responding to emergencies
 Australian Red Cross: *Australian First Aid*
 St John Ambulance

Contact

Your doctor – listed under Medical Practitioners in the yellow pages of the phone book

Your Self Care pharmacist – to find: ph 02 6283 4777

For first aid training, kits and information:

- St John Ambulance – under S in the white pages of the phone book or visit <http://www.stjohn.org.au/index.html>
- Australian Red Cross – under R in the white pages of the phone book

In case of poisoning, phone the **Poisons Information Centre** on 131 126 from anywhere in Australia.

Pharmacists are medicines experts. Ask your pharmacist for advice when choosing a medicine.

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