

Understanding what you need to know on helping a sick, injured/ill baby or child in an emergency is critical until the arrival of the emergency services.

What is emergency first aid?

As the name suggests, emergency first aid is a form of first aid that can be used in situations that can be deemed an emergency. During an emergency, you will need to give first aid, or else the person who is the casualty may end up being even worse or not being able to recover as easily as they may otherwise have been able to.

What is involved in emergency first aid?

There are lots of things that can happen and be classed as emergency [first aid](#), you cannot plan for all of them, all of the time, but you can make sure that you have some idea of what you need to do in an emergency first aid situation.

To help you, here is some basic information about some of the most common emergency first-aid situations.

Allergic reaction

An [allergic reaction](#) is when someone comes across something that to them is an allergen. Not everyone is allergic to the same thing and many people will be allergic to something that other people are not. There are a variety of symptoms that can indicate that someone is having an allergic reaction to something. This includes sneezing, itchy nose, running nose, red eyes and watering, wheezing and tightness in the chest.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a more severe [allergic reaction](#). The allergens may be similar to an allergic reaction but the symptoms can be much more severe and happen quickly. Anaphylaxis can cause itchy skin with a raised red rash, it can also cause swelling to occur to the eyes, lips and both the hands and feet. In a severe attack, the airway can also swell, which means that the person is unable to breathe and death can occur.

Depending on the severity of the reaction and the person's allergy level, the required treatment may be an antihistamine or it may be an epi-pen.

Asthma

Asthma is a common lung condition that can cause breathing difficulties. Whilst it is most often associated with children, it can occur with people of all ages. The severity of asthma can vary from person to person and for the most part, they will be able to live a normal life. However, there are going to be times when someone who has asthma will find that their issue is triggered and they will find it difficult to breathe.

As a first aider, it is most likely that you will need to give the person with asthma an inhaler to help their airways to clear and for them to find it easier to breathe again.

Bites and stings

Bites and stings can be painful when they are a solitary occurrence and the person has no allergies. However, they can be dangerous and even fatal if they are received in high numbers, or if the person who has been bitten or stung develops anaphylaxis.

Bleeding

Someone who is bleeding can often find themselves in difficulty quite quickly, which means that bleeding needs to be treated. The severity of the bleeding can vary the treatment that is needed, however, the main aim is to always stop the bleeding and to help the blood to start to clot and therefore form a natural barrier.

Bone, joint and muscle injuries

Bone, joint and muscle injuries need to be treated carefully and more often than not your main aim will be to keep the casualty comfortable and to ensure that their injury does not get any worse. This will often be until the medical emergency services can arrive and treat the casualty.

Burns and scalds

Burns and scalds can vary in their severity from first to third-degree burns. First-degree burns only affect the outer layers of the skin and require a small amount of treatment to help the person feel comfortable and to heal. Third-degree burns affect the skin much deeper and they will require the casualty to seek medical assistance as soon as they can.

Child and baby resuscitation (CPR)

CPR can be given to a person who is unable to breathe and does not have a pulse. The idea is to ensure that they have air moving into their lungs and that the heart is moving this oxygen around the body.

CPR can be given to adults, children and babies and the approach that you take will depend on their age.

Childhood conditions

There are a variety of different conditions that can occur in children that will require first aid. These can vary in severity and nature, but having an idea of how to deal with the majority of them will allow you to work out the best approach to take.

Choking baby or child

Choking in a baby or child is an emergency and requires immediate treatment. You should, as a first aider, aim to get whatever the blockage is out of the airway and allow the child or baby to start breathing again. This is done with back slaps to loosen the item and a posture that will then allow it to fall out of the airway and mouth.

Eye injuries

Eye injuries are the most common ones that people can feel strange about dealing with. You should never poke around too much in an eye, instead your approach should be to encourage it out by washing the eye with clean water.

Fainting

Fainting is a common first-aid issue that you may have to deal with. When someone faints you need to make sure that they are safe and comfortable and stay with them until they come around. You may need to place them into the recovery position until they come to and ensure that they feel safe when they do wake up as they can often be confused and disorientated.

Foreign objects

A foreign object is found within a body that should not be there. The temptation can be to move them, but this can often be the worst thing for

you to do. You need to make sure that there is support for the object so that medical help can be gained.

Head injuries

Head injuries can be incredibly serious and they should be treated as such. You need to keep movement to a minimum and stay with the casualty ensuring that they are conscious throughout. Of course, if they do lose consciousness you will need to deal with this and also you need to check for any bleeding and treat that accordingly too.

Heat and cold extremes

Both heat and cold in extreme can be harmful. Extreme cold is hyperthermia and this needs to be treated gently and slowly. The person needs to be removed from the cold and be warmed up with layers, often trying to move them from a cold floor. You will need to monitor them and their breathing too.

Extreme heat can be known as heat stroke or heat exhaustion and can cause the person to become quite unwell quickly. You will need to try and find ways to keep them cool and encourage them to lie down which will protect them against fainting. You want to cool them down slowly and sponge them down to reduce their temperature.

Low blood sugar

A diabetic emergency needs to be dealt with quickly to give the person the best chance of recovery. The person will need to be given sugary foods and drinks, depending on whether they are conscious and able to eat or drink. If the person knows they are diabetic and they can manage their diabetes, then they may carry glucose gels and tablets to help to raise their blood sugar.

Meningitis

Meningitis is a viral infection that impacts the protective membranes of the brain and the spinal cord. It is most common in children, however, can occur at any age. Meningitis needs to be treated in a hospital and the most important thing to be able to do is to recognise the symptoms and signs of it occurring in the person and know that they need to be taken directly to the hospital.

Minor and severe bleeding

Bleeding, even minor bleeding needs to be stopped. The approach that you take depends on the type of bleed, however, pressure on the part of the body where it occurs is the best way to help your body to clot and to create its protective barrier.

Poisons

Poisons need to be treated at the hospital, however, as a first aider what you can do is find out what the poison is and to be able to give the medical team the information that they are going to need to be able to plan the best medical treatment to provide them with.

Seizures

When someone is having a seizure you need to be able to protect them and to ensure that they do not hurt themselves. They may have medication to help them to come out of their seizures, so you can find out what this is. You should not try to stop their movements, you should only just focus on their head and protect this.

Shock

Shock needs to be treated just like a faint. They need to be placed on the floor to stop them from falling, and their legs need to be elevated and this will limit the chance of further injuries occurring to them. They need to be kept still and if the shock is caused by another emergency, this should be treated too.

Spinal injuries

When someone has a suspected spinal injury they should not be moved if they are in a safe place. The only reason that you would move someone is if there is a chance that they may be further injured, but all efforts should be made to try and manage the situation around them and keep them completely still and calm until medical help arrives.

Unresponsive child or baby

If a baby or child is unresponsive you need to stay calm and check whether they are breathing (and need to be placed in the recovery position) or they are not breathing and CPR needs to begin.