

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) for Children with Disabilities

CPR is a life-saving technique used when someone's breathing or heartbeat has stopped. Learning CPR is crucial for caregivers, as it provides the skills needed to respond in emergencies. When performing CPR on children with disabilities, it is important to consider their specific needs and adapt your approach accordingly.

Steps for CPR:

1. Assess the Situation:

- **Safety First:** Ensure the area is safe for both you and the child.
- **Check Responsiveness:** Gently tap the child and speak loudly to assess if they respond. If there is no response, proceed immediately to the next steps.

2. Call for Help:

- If someone is nearby, instruct them to call emergency services (999) while you start CPR.

3. Perform Chest Compressions:

- **Positioning:** Place the child on their back on a firm surface.
- **Hand Placement:** Adjust hand position based on the child's size and physical condition. Be gentle yet firm for children with physical disabilities.
- **Compression Depth and Rate:** Compress the chest about one-third to one-half the depth of the chest, aiming for approximately 2 inches (5 centimetres) deep. Perform compressions at a rate of 100-120 compressions per minute.

4. Rescue Breaths (if trained and willing):

If trained and comfortable, proceed with rescue breaths:

- **Airway Positioning:** Tilt the child's head back slightly to keep the airway open.
- **Seal and Deliver Breaths:** Pinch the child's nose shut and place your mouth over theirs to deliver gentle breaths. Ensure each breath is just enough to make the chest rise.

Seizure Management

Understanding how to manage seizures safely can help prevent injuries and provide comfort during an episode. Here is a step-by-step guide on seizure first aid:

During the Seizure:

1. Help to the Floor:

- If possible, gently guide the child to the floor to prevent injury.

2. Protect the Head:

- Cushion the child's head with a folded coat, jumper, or hands to avoid head trauma.

3. Loosen Tight Clothing:

- Loosen any tight clothing around the neck to aid breathing.

4. Clear the Area:

- Move objects away from the child to reduce the risk of injury and ask bystanders to step back.

5. **Roll to the Side (if necessary):**
 - If there are concerns about the child's airway, carefully roll them onto their side.
6. **Time the Seizure:**
 - Note the exact start time and duration of the seizure.
7. **Check for Identification:**
 - If the child is unfamiliar, look for identification or medical alert information.
8. **Call Emergency Services (999) if:**
 - The seizure lasts more than 3 minutes.
 - The child's response does not improve within 10 minutes after the seizure.
 - The child has a second seizure.
 - This is the child's first major seizure or if there is no history of epilepsy.
 - You do not know the child or are unsure of their condition.

After the Seizure:

1. **Check Airway and Breathing:**
 - Ensure the child's airway is clear and that they are breathing. Perform resuscitation if necessary.
2. **Recovery Position:**
 - Place the child in the recovery position to maintain an open airway.
3. **Keep Warm and Reassure:**
 - Keep the child warm (unless a high temperature caused the seizure) and reassure them as they regain awareness.
4. **Monitor Condition:**
 - Continuously monitor the child's airway, breathing, and response levels.
5. **Ensure Privacy:**
 - Move bystanders away before the child regains consciousness to preserve dignity.
6. **Seek Further Help if Needed:**
 - Call for an ambulance if the child's condition does not improve within 10 minutes or if there is any uncertainty about their recovery.

Wound Care

Children with disabilities may have an increased likelihood of accidents or injuries. Basic wound care skills are essential for caregivers to ensure proper treatment and recovery. Here are the key steps and considerations:

Basic Wound Care Steps

1. **Cleaning the Wound:**
 - Use clean water and sterile swabs to remove any dirt or debris from the wound.
 - Clean from the Centre of the wound outward to avoid introducing more dirt.
2. **Applying Sterile Dressings:**

- Use sterile dressings to cover the wound and prevent infection.
 - Secure the dressing to keep it in place without restricting blood flow.
3. **Knowing When to Seek Further Medical Attention:**
 - Be aware of signs that require medical attention, such as excessive bleeding, deep wounds, or signs of infection (redness, swelling, pus).
 4. **Specific Considerations:**
 - Consider the child's condition, such as fragile skin or impaired healing, when providing care.

Basic Wound and Injury Assessment

Developing the ability to assess the severity of wounds or injuries is crucial. Here is how to recognize and respond to different types of wounds and injuries:

1. **Contusion (Bruise):**

- Caused by ruptured capillaries bleeding under the skin, often due to a blow or underlying issue like a fracture.
- **Treatment:** Apply an ice pack or cold water to the affected area as soon as possible.

2. **Abrasion (Graze):**

- Occurs when the top layer of skin is scraped off, often due to a fall or friction burn. May contain dirt particles leading to infection.
- **Treatment:** Remove dirt with clean water and sterile swabs, cleaning from the centre outward.

3. **Laceration (Rip or Tear):**

- A rip or tear in the skin, more likely to contain dirt than a cut but bleeds less.
- **Treatment:** Treat as a bleed and take steps to prevent infection.

4. **Incision (Clean Cut):**

- Caused by a sharp object, like glass or a knife. May involve severed tendons or blood vessels and bleed freely.
- **Treatment:** Treat as a bleed and prevent infection.

5. **Puncture (Stab Wound):**

- Caused by objects like nails or a stab. Appears small in diameter but may penetrate deeply, damaging organs and causing internal bleeding.
- **Treatment:** Seek urgent medical attention if deep penetration is suspected.
- Do not remove an embedded object, as it may be controlling bleeding and removal could cause further damage.

Choking

Choking occurs when an object becomes lodged in a person's throat, blocking their airway and preventing them from breathing properly.

First Aid Steps for Choking

1. **Encourage Coughing:**

- If someone is choking, encourage them to cough to try to clear the blockage.
- Signs of severe blockage include the person holding their chest or neck and being unable to speak, breathe, or cough. In such cases, you will need to assist them.

2. **Give Back Blows:**

- Bend the person forward and give up to 5 back blows.
- Use the heel of your hand to hit them firmly between the shoulder blades.
- This creates a strong vibration and pressure in the airway, which can dislodge the blockage and allow them to breathe again.

3. **Perform Abdominal Thrusts:**

- If the blockage persists, give up to 5 abdominal thrusts.
- Stand behind the person, wrap your arms around their waist, and pull inwards and upwards above their belly button.
- Abdominal thrusts can force air from the lungs to dislodge the object.

4. **Seek urgent medical attention**

- If the person is still choking after back blows and abdominal thrusts, seek urgent medical attention for emergency assistance.
- Continue repeating the steps of back blows and abdominal thrusts until the person can breathe again or help arrives.

Fainting

Cause:

Fainting is typically due to poor nervous control of the blood vessels and heart, leading to dilated blood vessels in the lower body, a slowed heart rate, and reduced blood pressure. This causes a temporary reduction in blood supply to the brain.

Typical Causes:

1. Fright or pain.
2. Prolonged periods of inactivity (e.g., standing or sitting).
3. Lack of food.
4. Emotional stress.
5. Heat exhaustion.

Treatment of Fainting

1. **Lay the Casualty Down:**

- Place the person on a flat surface, preferably the floor.
- Raise their legs to help return blood to vital organs and increase blood pressure.

2. **Check Airway and Breathing:**

- Ensure the airway is clear and the person is breathing.

3. **Remove Stressors:**

- Address any potential stressors, such as crowding, and ensure plenty of fresh air.

4. **Reassure and Monitor:**

- Calmly reassure the person as they regain consciousness.
- Prevent them from sitting up suddenly.

5. **Repeat Treatment if Needed:**

- If the person feels faint again, repeat the treatment and look for any underlying causes.

6. **Seek Medical Help if Necessary:**

- If the person does not recover quickly, remains unconscious, or if you are unsure, check the airway and breathing again, place them in the recovery position, and seek medical attention.