

# **FIRST AID – Level 1**

"First Aid is the immediate care given to an injured or sick person until the services of a physician can be obtained." This is the opening sentence in the American Red Cross First Aid Textbook for Juniors, and is the definition of First Aid. Notice that first aid is the immediate care that is performed before the professional medical assistance arrives. First aiders are not expected to be doctors or to have a great knowledge about medicine. If you are called on to administer first aid to an injured person, you must be able to recognize and treat some very important problems. Knowing what to do and what not to do before the professional arrives is expected.

## **BRUISE**

What is a bruise? A bruise is an injury, such as a black eye, where the skin turns a darker shade of color because the blood vessels are broken. The treatment for a bruise is to place something cold on the injured area to prevent additional tissue swelling and to slow down the internal bleeding. A handkerchief dipped in cool water or an ice cube wrapped in a cloth works very well.

## **BURNS**

Burns are classified according to the degree of skin damage. A first-degree burn can be recognized by a light redness of the skin with some swelling and pain. You can get a first-degree burn from the sun (sunburn) or touching something that is hot, like a frying pan. A second-degree burn will cause the skin to turn a darker red color and blisters will begin forming around the area that is burned. You can get a second-degree burn from the sun, from a fire, or being scalded by hot liquids. The treatment for both degrees of burns is the same. It is important to cool the burned area as soon as possible. This can be done by soaking the burned area in cold water or by applying cold-water soaked pads. In third degree burns, there is deep tissue damage. The victim urgently needs medical attention. Treat these by covering the burned area with a thick, clean, dry bandage or with clean plastic wrap or plastic bags. The burned area is especially sensitive to infection and should be kept as clean as possible. Also treat for shock.

## **BLISTERS**

Most blisters appear on the feet and hands because of something continually rubbing against the skin. At first, the skin will turn red and become tender. If the rubbing continues, a blister will be formed. The blister is a cushion of water; the body's way of protecting the skin from further injury. Never break a blister. The best treatment is to keep it clean and covered with a bandage or moleskin.

## **INSECT BITES**

There are many insects that annoy us with their bites. Chiggers, ants, flies, ticks, gnats and mosquitoes are just a few. The treatment for these bites is to dab a small amount of calamine lotion on the area to relieve any itching or minor pain.

## **SMALL CUT**

When you have a small cut, you should guard it against germs and infection. Wash the wound with soap and water and apply an antiseptic such as Neosporine. You should then cover the wound with a bandage.

## **NOSE BLEEDS**

If your nose starts bleeding, the easiest way to stop it is to apply a cold, wet cloth directly to the nose or to pinch the nostrils between your fingers for a few minutes while tilting your head forward. In the past it was taught to tip your head back, but this caused the blood to run down into the person's stomach and could give the person an upset stomach. The bleeding should then stop.

## **SPLINTERS**

Splinters are small fragments of wood, metal or glass that enter and break off just below the surface of the skin. The easiest way to remove them is with a tweezers or sterile needle. Once the splinter is removed, the area should be treated as you would a small cut, by washing and then covering with a bandage.