

Controlling Bleeding

SLIDE 1

A bleeding victim requires immediate medical attention. As always, survey the scene as you approach to make sure it is safe for you to enter. You will be no help to anyone if you become a victim. Ask a specific individual to call 911. Wear latex gloves whenever blood is present in order to protect yourself from infection. When you are protected, begin treating the victim.

SLIDE 2

Significant bleeding is life threatening, so the first thing to do is to control the bleeding. Controlling the bleeding helps prevent infection in the victim's wound, and it prevents the victim from going into shock.

SLIDE 3

To control bleeding, first lay the victim down, being sure not to cause further injury. If you suspect a spinal injury, do not move the patient. Next, apply direct pressure with a clean and sterile gauze or bandage. Elevate the wound above the level of the heart, as this will limit the flow of blood to the wound. Keep applying pressure until help arrives. As a last resort in a life-threatening situation, use a tourniquet to stop blood flow to the wound completely.

SLIDE 4

Direct pressure involves using a clean compress directly over the wound. Use sterile gauze if you have it, a clean wash cloth or towel or even a piece of clothing. Under no circumstances should you remove the compress even if it is soaked through. Removing the compress may interfere with a clotting that has already begun. If the compress is soaked through, add another on top of it and keep applying pressure to the top compress. Elevate the wound as much as possible. Keep it as high as you can above the heart. If the bleeding continues use the indirect pressure while continuing direct pressure.

SLIDE 5

A tourniquet is a tight band that is placed on the arm or leg between the wound and the heart so as to restrict all blood flow to the area of the wound. A tourniquet is the method of last resort used to control severe bleeding. You must realize that when a tourniquet is used that you must assume that the victim is going to lose the arm or leg to which it is applied. It should therefore be applied in only the most extreme of circumstances.

SLIDE 6

Once a tourniquet is in place do not remove the tourniquet until additional medical help arrives. Most medical authorities believe that the most severe bleeding cases can and should be handled without a tourniquet. This includes most instances when the arm or leg is completely severed.

SLIDE 7

Don't forget that in cases of severe bleeding, traumatic shock is very likely. Be sure to watch for symptoms of shock and to treat for it if the victim presents symptoms or is unconscious. When possible, remember to keep the victim lying down, with the feet elevated above the heart. Keep the victim warm as well. Get medical help as soon as possible.