



Unit 6

Foreign Objects, Poisoning & Burns

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Know how to act in the event that a child swallows a foreign object
- ✓ Identify the appropriate course of action to take to minimise harm to the child
- ✓ Provide essential first aid in the event of a poisoning or chemical burn

Unit 6

Foreign Objects, Poisoning & Burns

Swallowed Foreign Object

Children may put small items in their mouths when playing. An adult may swallow a bone by mistake or ingest unlikely objects on purpose. Most objects will pass through the digestive system, but some can cause a blockage or perforation.

CAUTION

- Do not let the casualty make himself vomit because the object could damage the esophagus

YOUR AIMS

- To obtain medical advice as soon as possible

WHAT TO DO

1. Reassure the casualty and find out what he swallowed.
2. Seek medical advice.

Foreign Object in the Eye

Foreign objects such as grit, a loose eyelash, or a contact lens that are floating on the surface of the eye can be easily rinsed out. However, you must not attempt to remove anything that sticks to the eye or penetrates the eyeball because this may damage the eye. Instead, make sure that the casualty receives urgent medical attention.

CAUTION

- Do not touch anything that is sticking to, or embedded in, the eyeball. Cover the eye and arrange to take or send the casualty to the hospital

RECOGNITION

There may be:

- Blurred vision
- Pain or discomfort
- Redness and watering of the eye
- Eyelids held tight in spasm

Your Aims

- To prevent injury to the eye

Special Case If Object Is Under Upper Eyelid

Ask the casualty to grasp the lashes on her upper eyelid and pull the upper lid over the lower lid; the lower lashes may brush the particle clear. If this is unsuccessful, ask her to try blinking underwater because this may also make the object float off. Do not attempt to do this if the object is large or abrasive.

What to Do

1. Advise the casualty not to rub her eye. Ask her to sit down facing a light
2. Stand beside, or just behind, the casualty. Gently separate her eyelids with your thumbs or finger and thumb. Ask her to look right, left, up, and down. Examine every part of her eye as she does this.
3. If you can see a foreign object on the white of the eye, wash it out by pouring clean water from a glass or pitcher, or by using a sterile eyewash if you have one. Put a towel around the casualty's shoulders. Hold her eye open and pour the water from the inner corner so that it drains onto the towel.
4. If this is unsuccessful, try lifting the object off with a moist swab or the damp corner of a clean handkerchief or tissue. If you still cannot remove the object, seek medical help.

Foreign Object in the Ear

If a foreign object becomes lodged in the ear, it may cause temporary loss of hearing by blocking the ear canal. In some cases, a foreign object may damage the eardrum. Young children frequently push objects into their ears. The tips of cotton swabs are often left in the ear. Insects can fly or crawl into the ear and may cause distress.

Caution

- Do not attempt to remove any object that is lodged in the ear. You may cause serious injury and push the foreign object in farther

YOUR AIMS

- To prevent injury to the ear
- To remove a trapped insect
- To arrange transportation to the hospital if a foreign object is lodged in the ear

What to Do

1. Arrange to take or send the casualty to the hospital. Do not try to remove a lodged foreign object yourself
2. Reassure the casualty during the journey or until medical help arrives

Special Case Insect inside the Ear

If there's an insect inside the ear, you can support the casualty's head with the affected ear facing upwards, and gently flood the ear with tepid water. This should allow the insect to float out.

- If this flooding does not remove the insect, seek medical advice.



Foreign Object in the Nose

Young children may push small objects up their noses. Objects can block the nose and cause infection. If the object is sharp it can damage the tissues, and “button” batteries can cause burns and bleeding. Do not try to remove a foreign object; you may cause injury or push it farther into the airway.

Caution

- Do not attempt to remove the foreign object, even if you can see it

Recognition

There may be:

- Difficult or noisy breathing through the nose
- Swelling of the nose
- Smelly or blood-stained discharge, indicating that an object may have been lodged for some time

Your Aims

- To arrange transportation to the hospital

WHAT TO DO

1. Try to keep the casualty quiet and calm. Tell him to breathe through his mouth at a normal rate. Advise him not to poke inside his nose to try to remove the object himself.
2. Arrange to take or send the casualty to the hospital, so that it can be safely removed by medical staff

Poisoning

A poison is a substance that causes injury, illness or death if it enters the body. Poisons may enter the body in the form of liquids, solids, or gas and vapour fumes.

Poisons can enter via:

- the mouth and digestive system
- fumes through the lungs
- absorption of a chemical through the skin

Symptoms and signs – Not all may be present

- nausea or vomiting
- diarrhoea
- abdominal pain
- unconsciousness or deteriorating conscious state
- seizures
- breathing difficulty

- altered or changed behaviour – e.g. hallucination, aggression

How you can help

1. Check for dangers before approaching the patient

- Ensure safety for yourself, the patient, and any others before approaching to give first aid. If safe and necessary, remove the patient to a safer area.
- Note any information about the nature of the poisoning incident – e.g. tablets, berries, burns around the mouth, etc.

2. Check the patient's level of consciousness

If unconscious:

- If the person is breathing normally, turn them onto their side in a supported position and open and clear their airway. **Call 999 for an ambulance.**
- If the person is not breathing normally **call 999 for an ambulance** and start CPR.

If conscious:

- If the mouth has burns from a corrosive poison, wash the poison out as best you can with water.

3. Call 999 for an Ambulance

- Call 999 for an ambulance if the person has difficulty breathing, if they are in severe pain, or if the person has an altered (changed) level of consciousness.
- Follow all instructions concerning medical advice or ambulance transport to hospital.

Special Poisoning Situations

Inhaled Poisons

1. Check for Safety before Approaching the Patient

- If poisonous fumes are present in a confined space the patient needs to be moved into fresh air as soon as possible. The first aider may need to enter the space if the patient is unconscious and must be dragged to safety. However, the first aider should take no undue risks.
- When it is safe to do so, check the patient's level of consciousness and give general care for poisoning.

When moved into fresh air the patient may recover rapidly from inhaled gases or fumes.

However, some toxic chemicals can cause serious problems once inhaled into the lungs and medical assessment and treatment are required.

Burns

Contact with any source of heat can cause a burn or scald injury. A burn can result from contact with a heat source such as hot metal or electricity, hot liquid or steam. Clothing over the area may retain the heat and cause further injury.

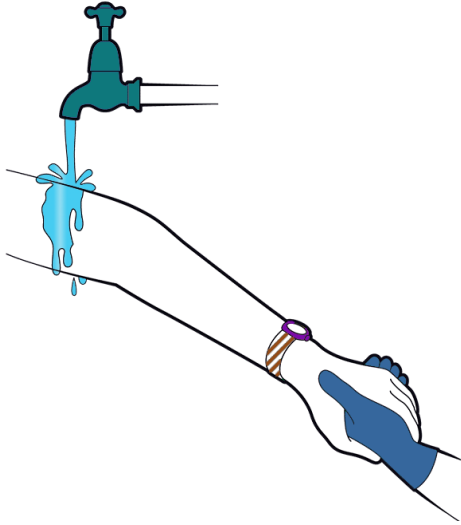
Symptoms and signs – Not all may be present

- severe pain
- red, peeling or blistered skin (or blackened if caused by electricity)
- watery fluid weeping from the injured area
- the patient may be pale, cold and sweaty, feeling faint and dizzy, and complaining of nausea or vomiting
- swelling of the injured area may appear later

What to do

1. Remove the heat source from the patient, or the patient from the heat source, whichever is easiest and safest.
2. **Cool the injured area**
 - Immediately cool the injured area for a minimum of 20 minutes using cool running water from a tap or shower. In the absence of water use any cool clean fluid such as beer or soft drink.
 - A first aid burn gel may be applied, but this should be after cooling with water (as above), provided water is available.
 - If any clothing is wet with hot liquid or affected by a chemical splash, remove it quickly and carefully.
 - Remove any tight clothing, watches, rings or jewellery from the injured area, if possible, because of the risk of swelling.

Make the casualty comfortable by helping him sit or lie down. Flood the injury with cold water; cool for at least ten minutes or until pain is relieved.



Call for Emergency Help

Call 999 for emergency help if necessary. Tell the dispatcher that the injury is a burn and explain what caused it, and the estimated size and depth.

See a doctor if the burn is causing ongoing significant pain, or involves the face, hands, joints or genitals.

3. Position patient

- If the patient is feeling faint lay them down.
- The injured part (depending on the location of the burn) can be placed in a bowl or bucket of cold water if this is easier than pouring water over the burn.

4. Apply a sterile dressing

- After cooling the injured area for up to 20 minutes, apply a sterile dressing.
- Use a non-adherent dressing or a piece of clean plastic kitchen wrap.

DO NOT break blisters or remove peeled skin.

DO NOT try to remove any fabric that is stuck to a burn.

DO NOT apply creams, ointments, lotions or butter to any burn injury because infection may occur and complicate the injury.

DO NOT place small children or babies in a cold bath or shower for a full 20 minutes, as this can cause hypothermia.

Remember that any substance applied to a burn injury may have to be removed later in hospital and may also delay the healing process.

Avoid using adhesive tape on the skin around the burn because this may cause further tissue damage.

Chemical Burns

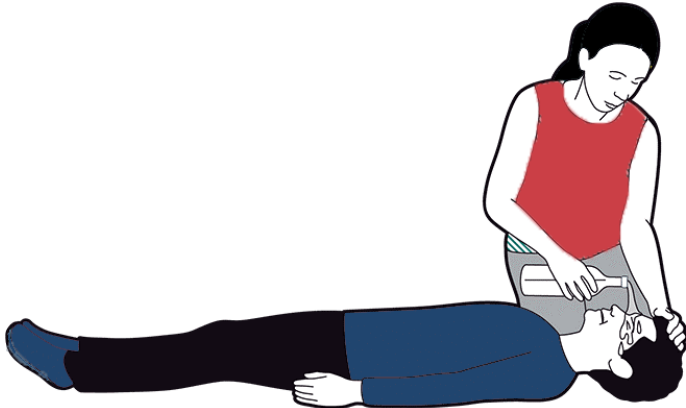
How you can help

1. Quickly remove any Contaminated Clothing



- Avoid contact with any chemical and further injury to the patient.
- If the chemical is a powder brush it off, avoiding contact, before flushing with water.

2. Cool the Injury



Flood the burned area with copious amounts of water and continue for up to 20 minutes.

3. If a Chemical Solution has Splashed into the Eyes

- Hold the affected eyelids open to ensure water washes thoroughly under the lids to remove any trapped chemical.

Call 999 for an Ambulance Urgently.

Bitumen burns

- If a limb or finger is involved, flood the area with cool water for at least 20 minutes.
- Cover any exposed burns with a non-stick dressing.
- Do not apply lotions or ointments.
- Do not pop blisters
- Do not attempt to remove the bitumen
- Seek medical assistance

Burns involving the Mouth or Throat

If the patient has been accidentally exposed to fire or heated gases, damage may occur to the mouth and airway. There may be signs of burning around the lips, nose, mouth, eyebrows or lashes.

A dry cough or hoarse voice is an early sign of airway injury and prompt medical care is essential.

How you can help

1. Remove the patient to a safe area

- If in a closed area, and if safe for the first aider, it is vital to remove the patient to a place free of the risk of further injury and preferably into fresh air.

2. Cool the injury

- If smoke or toxic gases may have been inhaled – including carbon monoxide from a vehicle exhaust, chlorine, ammonia or hydrochloric acid – remove the patient from any enclosed or restricted area into an open area, pour running water over the burn for 20 minutes.
- If there is any breathing difficulty allow the patient to find the position enabling easy breathing with the head and chest raised.

After an inhalation incident the patient may suffer from a severe lack of oxygen due to internal damage to the throat, upper airway and lungs.

Call 999 for an ambulance.

Clothing on fire

How you can help

- Smother the flames with a coat or blanket and set the patient onto the ground to remove oxygen from the burning area.
- The rule is to STOP, DROP and ROLL the patient before checking for burns and cooling the injury.

Further Reading:

- ✓ *ACEP First Aid Manual, 5th Edition (Dk First Aid Manual) Paperback – Illustrated, September 1, 2014 by DK Publishing (Author)*
- ✓ *Fast First Aid For Babies And Children : A Parent's Illustrated Guide to Complete Medical Care For Children Kindle Edition by Emily Davids RND (Author) 2021*