



First aid fact sheet

Shock



Shock is a life-threatening condition.

Any health condition or trauma can cause shock.

It is important that you treat the injury or illness that is causing the shock, as well as treating the person and their shock as a whole.

Signs and symptoms

Initial shock

- pale face, fingernails and lips
- cool, moist skin
- faintness, dizziness
- nausea
- anxiety

Severe shock

- restlessness
- thirst
- weak, rapid pulse, which can become weaker or slower
- shallow, fast breathing
- drowsiness, confusion
- blue lips, face, earlobes, fingernails (this is a late sign and means the patient is very sick)
- unconsciousness

What to do

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 Help the patient to lie down. Do not raise their legs.
- 3 Reassure the patient.
- 4 Manage severe bleeding then treat other injuries.
- 5 Loosen any tight clothing.
- 6 Keep the patient warm with a blanket or similar. Do not use any source of direct heat.
- 7 Give the patient small amounts of cool water to drink frequently if they are conscious, do not have abdominal trauma, and are unlikely to require an operation immediately.
- 8 Place the patient in the recovery position if they have difficulty breathing, become unconscious or are likely to vomit.
- 9 Seek medical aid or call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance if the patient's injuries require it.

In a medical emergency call Triple Zero (000)

DRSABCD Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation

You could save a life with first aid training • www.stjohn.org.au • **1300 360 455**

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