



# FIRST AID

## Section 1: Overview

First-Aid is the help given to a sick or injured person until full medical treatment is available. While we are not medically trained professionals, we can still learn some valuable skills to help treat our friends and family as well as ourselves. Having this knowledge can help reduce the risk of injuries worse.

## Section 2: Basic First Aid

Basic first aid knowledge is an important life skill for all of us. Having and using this knowledge can help prevent making our injuries worse.

### Be prepared.

Make sure your home is stocked with some essentials or know where to get them (such as Wellness at St. James). These include bandages, gauze, pain relievers, cold medicine, antibiotic cream, and a digital thermometer.



- A pain that lasts more than 3 days
- A cough and shortness of breath that lasts more than 48 hours
- An infected cut, a large cut, or a burn
- A fever over 101.5°F or a fever that's lasted longer than three days
- A fever combined with vomiting and/or severe diarrhea
- A rash that burns or covers a large area of skin for more than 24 hours
- If you are unsure, you can always seek help from your parents or an adult (such as Nurse Ayton at Wellness at St. James)

## KNOW WHAT TO DO

### For minor cuts or scrapes:

- Press a clean cloth or bandage on the wound to stop the bleeding.
- Clean the wound with water and apply an antibiotic cream, like Neosporin.
- Apply a bandage, and make sure to change it when it becomes wet or dirty.

### For a fever:

- If **below 101.5°F**, drink a lot of water and wet your body with warm water.
- If **over 101.5°F**, seek medical assistance.

### For minor burns:

- Hold the burned spot under cool (not cold) water for 3-5 minutes and cover it loosely with gauze. Don't put ice or ointment on the burn.
- Don't break a blister if it forms.
- Take Advil, Motrin, or Tylenol for the pain. Be sure to read the directions and that you are taking the proper amount.

### For coughing:

- Take over-the-counter cold medicines.
- Eat some honey, drink tea, and suck lozenges.



## Section 3: Cuts, Scrapes, Abrasions

Whether it's scraping our knees while playing, getting a paper cut, or falling we can get cuts, scrapes, and abrasions often.

Luckily, minor injuries like these do not need professional medical help. Our body is able to heal on its own, but we should make sure to take proper steps to ensure a speedy and healthy recovery.

### What to do

A small cut, scrape, abrasion will usually heal well without medical care. Here's what to do:

- **Put pressure.** Stop bleeding by pressing a clean, soft cloth against the wound for up to until it stops bleeding.
- **Don't Peek.** As you keep the pressure, avoid the urge to peek. Lifting the bandage may start the bleeding again.
- **Clean the wound.** Run warm water over the cut for 5 minutes. Then gently wash it with soap. If there's dirt or debris in the wound, remove it if you can – a soft, damp cloth can help. If you can't get all the dirt out, call your doctor's office.
- **Dry it first.** Dry the area lightly and cover it with gauze or other type of bandage. If the bandage gets wet or dirty, change it right away.
- **Ointment.** If you want, put a light layer of an antibiotic ointment around the cut. Make sure you're not allergic to the medications in the ointment. However, this is not necessary with small cuts especially if you keep it clean.
- **Check daily.** Everyday, take off the bandage and gently wash the injury. If the cut is still open, reapply antibiotic and put on a new bandage. Watch for signs of infection.
- **Don't pick!** Picking at the scab or skin. This can introduce bacteria to the cut and cause an infection.



### Call a parent or doctor if...

- Blood is spurting
- It won't stop bleeding
- Wound is long, deep, or wide



*While waiting, keep pressure on the wound with a clean bandage or cloth.*

## INFECTIONS

### Avoiding Infections

Certain types of cuts require additional care.

- Cuts from metal need tetanus shots, if you are not up to date
- Bites that break the skin can also require to other necessary

### Signs of Infection

- swelling redness around the wound
- yellow or greenish-colored pus or cloudy wound drainage
- red streaking around the wound
- tenderness or pain around the wound
- fever

*Call your doctor right away and they may prescribe antibiotics to get rid of the infection.*

## Section 4: Nosebleeds

Though scary looking, nosebleeds are usually harmless and easily controlled. But frequent nosebleeds might indicate a more serious problem. If you get nosebleeds more than once a week, consult your doctor. Most cases of frequent nosebleeds are easily treated.

**Do not worry – most nosebleeds are easy to stop.**

### How can I stop a nosebleed?

Try these simple tips to stop a nosebleed:

- Get some tissues or clean cloth to catch the blood.
- Sit up or stand.
- Tilt your head forward and pinch your nose just below the bony part of your nose for 10 minutes.
- Pressure helps stop the blood flow and the nosebleed will usually stop with adequate pressure.

*If you get a nosebleed, don't blow your nose or tilt your head back. This can cause more bleeding and cause you to cough, choke on or swallow blood.*



*If you've tried the steps twice and the bleeding continues, consult your school nurse or a doctor.*

### After the initial nosebleed stops...

- Do not do activities that cause strain
- Try not to blow your nose for 24 hours.

### Can I prevent nosebleeds?

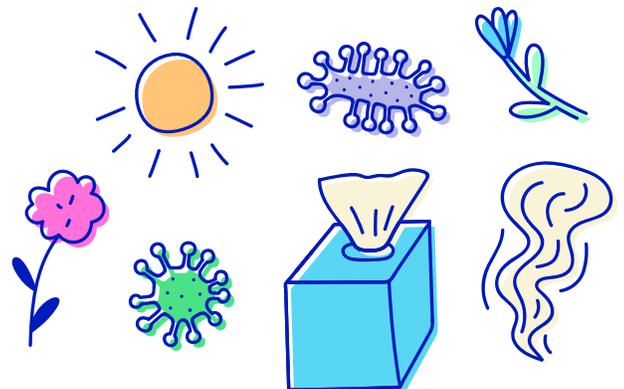
- When blowing your nose, do so gently into a soft tissue.
- Don't pick your nose.
- Purchase a cool-mist humidifier to moisten indoor air.
- Around the opening of the nostrils, gently apply saline (saltwater), nasal spray or gel, a dab petroleum jelly, or antibiotic ointment.
- Wear protective athletic equipment when playing sports that could cause injury to the nose.

An occasional nosebleed may make you worry, but there's no need to panic – now you know what to do!

## WHAT CAUSES NOSEBLEEDS

- **Dry air** is the most common cause.
- **Dry climate or heated indoor air** can dry out the nose, causing crusts that bleed when picked.
- **Colds** may irritate the lining of the nose. Bleeding may happen after repeated nose-blowing.
- **Allergies** can cause problems, and a doctor may prescribe medicine to control an itchy, runny, or stuffy nose that may dry out the nose.
- **Injury** to the nose may cause bleeding.

*If after 10 minutes the bleeding doesn't stop, seek medical attention.*



## Section 5: Dehydration

### What is dehydration?

Dehydration means the amount of water in the body has dropped below the level needed for the body to function. Small decreases don't cause problems, and in most cases, they go completely unnoticed. But not drinking enough to keep up with the loss of fluid can sometimes make a person feel sick.

Dehydration isn't as serious a problem for teens as it can be for babies or young children. But if you ignore your thirst, dehydration can slow you down.

### What are the signs and symptoms of dehydration?

- thirst
- feeling dizzy and lightheaded
- having a dry or sticky mouth
- peeing less and darker pee

If dehydration continues, a person will start to feel much sicker as more body systems (or organs) are affected.

### What causes dehydration?

- **Minor stomach illnesses** causes us to lose fluids and can also make us not feel like eating or drinking.
- **Sore throats** can make it hard to swallow food or drinks.
- **Sweating** from a fever, physical activity, or a hot day our bodies start to sweat to cool our body down. If we don't replace fluids regularly, we can get dehydrated.

### Treating Dehydration

Drinking lots of fluids, especially water, is a great way to avoid dehydration. However, if you feel dehydrated, it can usually be treated by drinking fluid, and resting in a cool, shaded spot.

But if you can't hold down any fluids; feel faint, weak, or dizzy; or are peeing much less than usual, you should tell an adult and visit your doctor.



**Seek medical or adult help if you can't hold down fluid from vomiting.**

Occasionally, dehydration might be a sign of something more serious, such as diabetes, so your doctor may run tests to rule out any other potential problems.



### DID YOU KNOW?

On top of drinking water, eating fruits and vegetables is a great and healthy way to increase water intake.



## PREVENTING DEHYDRATION

Here are some tips to prevent dehydration:

- On a warm day, wearing loose-fitting clothes and a hat to reduce sweating.
- Drink water beforehand, every 20 minutes, and after physical activity.
- Avoid outside during the hottest time of day (between noon - 3pm).
- If you are feeling sick, take frequent, small sips or suck on ice cubes.
- Avoid caffeine.



**Go to an emergency department immediately if your symptoms are severe and sudden.**

## Section 6: Allergies

Allergies are abnormal immune system reactions to things that are typically harmless. Your immune system mistakenly believes that this substance is harmful to your body.

### What happens in allergies?

In an attempt to protect the body, the immune system produces antibodies to that allergen. Those antibodies then cause certain cells in the body to release chemicals, such as *histamine*.

Histamine acts on the affected area and causes the symptoms of the allergic reaction.

### What are the signs and symptoms of allergies?

Allergic reactions can be mild, like a runny nose, minor rashes, or hives. Sometimes, they can be serious, like difficulty breathing.

In rare cases, an allergic reaction can become very severe — this is called *anaphylaxis*. Signs of anaphylaxis include:

- trouble breathing or swallowing
- swelling of the lips, tongue, and other parts
- dizziness or loss of consciousness

Anaphylaxis usually happens minutes after exposure to a trigger, such as a peanut, but some reactions can be delayed by up to 4 hours. Luckily, these reactions don't happen often and can be treated successfully.

### Dealing With Allergies

- **Avoidance.** If you know your allergies, be aware of your environment or foods you consume.
- **Medicine.** If you use medicine, follow directions carefully and make sure your regular doctor is aware of anything an allergist gives you.
- **Medical Emergency ID.** If you have a severe allergy, consider wearing a medical emergency ID (such as a MedicAlert bracelet), which explains your allergy and who to contact in an emergency.

## COMMON ALLERGIES

**Airborne particles.** These are the most common allergens and includes dust mites; mold; animal dander and saliva; and pollen.

**Foods.** Some can be serious, but many just cause mild symptoms like rashes. Common food allergies are: dairy, eggs, wheat, soy, nuts, and seafood.

**Insect stings.** Insect stings can cause allergic reactions, and can be severe, causing anaphylactic reactions in some.

**Medicines.** Antibiotics are the most common type of medicinal allergy. But there are many other medicines that cause reactions.

**Chemicals.** Cosmetics or laundry detergents can make people break out in hives. Dyes, household cleaners, and pesticides used on lawns or plants also can cause allergic reactions in some people.

## Section 7: Sprains

A **strain** is when a muscle or tendon (tissue that attaches muscle to bone) is stretched too far. Depending on severity, it may heal within a few weeks, but re-injury can happen easily.

A **sprain** is when ligaments (bands of tissue that hold bone to bone at the joints) stretch too far or tear. Healing can take 4–6 weeks but it can take longer.

The symptoms of a sprain are almost exactly the same as that of a broken bone. When in doubt, first aid for sprains should be the same as broken bones.

### THINK R.I.C.E.

After a sprain or strain:

- **Rest:** Rest the injury.
- **Ice:** Wrap an icepack or cold compress around injury right away for 20 minutes every hour.
- **Compress:** Support the injured part with an elastic compression bandage for at least 2 days.
- **Elevate:** Raise the injury above heart to decrease swelling.

**Seek medical attention if...**

- severe pain when touched or moved
- continued trouble bearing weight
- numbness or a feeling of “pins and needles” in the injured area
- limb looks “bent” or misshapen
- signs of infection
- injury doesn't seem to be improving after 5 to 7 days

## Section 8: Fractures

A **fracture** is when a break goes through part or all of a bone. It can also be called a “broken bone.”

The signs of a fracture depend on the type of break and which bone is affected. It is always painful, but there can be swelling and bruising. It may be hard to move and use. Sometimes the body part looks crooked or different than it did before the injury.

An X-ray, ordered by a doctor, is used to identify the break's location and type.



### SEEK MEDICAL HELP IF...

**If you think you have fractured or broken a bone, seek medical help immediately.**

Doctors treat most broken bones with a cast, splint, or brace. This keeps the broken bone from moving while it heals. Even broken bones that don't line up (called displaced) often will heal straight over time.

Sometimes the displaced bones are put back in place before the cast, splint, or brace is put on. This is done through a procedure called a reduction. This is also called “setting the bone.”



## Section 9: Concussion

A concussion is a type of mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) that is caused by a blow to the head or when the head moves back and forth with a lot of force. This causes chemical changes in the brain and, sometimes, damages the brain cells.

### What happens in a concussion?

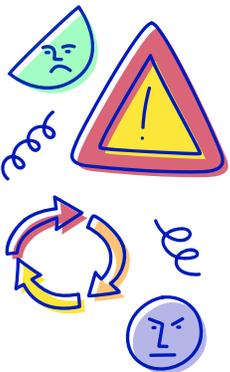
The skull helps protect the brain from injury while spinal fluid cushions the brain inside the skull. A blow or jolt to the head can hurt the brain directly or make the brain move around and bang up against the hard bone of the skull. This changes the signals between nerves, which causes concussion symptoms.

### Concussion Symptoms

- loss of consciousness
- headache
- blurred or double vision
- dizziness, balance problems, or trouble walking
- confusion and saying things that don't make sense
- being slow to answer questions
- slurred speech
- nausea or vomiting
- not remembering what happened
- not feeling well

**Symptoms of a concussion usually happen right away, but can show up hours or days after an injury like:**

- trouble focusing
- learning or memory problems
- a headache that gets worse
- sleep problems
- feeling sad, easily upset or angered, or nervous



### Seek medical assistance if you...

- have a severe headache or one that gets worse
- have a seizure
- pass out
- have other symptoms (such as continued vomiting) that worry you

These could be signs of a serious concussion, and you might need treatment in a hospital.

## DID YOU KNOW?

A concussion can still happen with a helmet, but the helmet can protect you from a skull fracture and serious brain injury.



## TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CONCUSSION

- Cut back on physical and high concentration activities
- Avoid any activities that can lead to another head injury
- Take a break when symptoms occur
- Rest often
- Do calm activities, such as conversing, reading, drawing, or playing a quiet game
- Cut down or avoid screen times
- Get plenty of sleep, 8–10 hours a night
- Avoid caffeine
- If you have a headache take pain killers that your doctor approved