

Check and Treat for Shock



Causes and Effects



- Shock may be caused by severe or minor trauma to the body. It usually is the result of
 - Significant loss of blood
 - Heart failure
 - Dehydration
 - Severe and painful blows to the body
 - Severe burns of the body
 - Severe wound infections
 - Severe allergic reactions to drugs, foods, insect stings, and snakebites.

Effects of Shock



- Shock stuns and weakens the body. When the normal blood flow in the body is upset, death can result. Early identification and proper treatment may save the casualty's life.

Signs/Symptoms



- Sweaty but cool skin (clammy skin)
- Paleness of skin
- Restlessness, nervousness
- Thirst
- Loss of blood (bleeding)
- Confusion (or loss of awareness)
- Faster-than-normal breathing rate
- Blotchy or bluish skin (especially around the mouth and lips)
- Nausea and/or vomiting.

Always treat for shock!



In the field, the procedures *to treat* shock are identical to procedures that would be performed *to prevent* shock. When treating a casualty, assume that shock is present or will occur shortly. By waiting until actual signs/symptoms of shock are noticeable, the rescuer may jeopardize the casualty's life.

Position the Victim



Figure 244 Clothing loosened and feet elevated.

- DO NOT move the casualty or his limbs if suspected fractures have not been splinted.
- Move the casualty to cover, if cover is available and the situation permits
- Lay the casualty on his back.
- Elevate the casualty's feet higher than the level of her heart. Use a stable object (a box, log, or rolled up clothing) so that her feet will not slip off

Special situations



A casualty in shock after suffering a heart attack, chest wound, or breathing difficulty, may breathe easier in a sitting position. If this is the case, allow him to sit upright, but monitor carefully in case his condition worsens.

More about Shock



Figure 2-45. Body temperature maintained.

- Loosen clothing at the neck, waist, or wherever it may be binding
- Prevent chilling or overheating. The key is to maintain body temperature. In cold weather, use a blanket. In hot weather, place the casualty in the shade and avoid excessive covering.

Calm the Victim



Figure 2-46. Casualty's head turned to side.

- Throughout the entire procedure of treating and caring for a casualty, the rescuer should reassure the victim and keep him/her calm. This can be done by being authoritative (taking charge) and by showing self-confidence. Assure the casualty that you are there to help.

Food or drink???



- During the treatment/prevention of shock, **DO NOT** give the casualty any food or drink. If you must leave the casualty or if he is unconscious, turn the body to the **LEFT** side to prevent choking should s/he vomit.
