

# 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 2-44. 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.