



First aid fact sheet

Electric shock



Even for a mild electric shock, encourage the patient to seek medical aid for assessment of potential effects on the heart.

Signs and symptoms

- difficulty in breathing or no breathing at all
- a weak, erratic pulse or no pulse at all
- burns, particularly entry and exit burns
- loss of consciousness
- cardiac arrest

Downed power lines

- Remain at least 6 metres from any cable.
- DO NOT attempt to remove the cable.
- If a vehicle is being touched by a high voltage cable, DO NOT go near the vehicle or try to remove the patient from the vehicle.
- Advise the patient not to move.

What to do

- 1 Check for danger to yourself, bystanders and the patient.
- 2 Switch off power, if possible, before trying to help the patient.
- 3 If the patient is in contact with high voltage lines, do not approach, but wait until power is disconnected by authorised electrical personnel.
- 4 If power cannot be switched off quickly, remove the patient from the electrical supply without directly touching them. Use a non-conductive, dry material (eg a dry wooden broom handle).
- 5 Follow DRSABCD. Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
- 6 Hold any burnt area under cool running water for 20 minutes.
- 7 Remove jewellery and clothing from burnt areas, unless stuck to the burn.
- 8 Cover the burnt area with a loose and light nonstick dressing, preferably clean, dry, non-fluffy material such as plastic cling film.
- 9 Seek medical aid.

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