



PAEDIATRIC EMERGENCIES AND FIRST AID

A quick guide for Parents and Caregivers

With children, emergencies can occur any time and without warning. And they can escalate very rapidly as children are more vulnerable to injury and illness. Therefore it's crucial for parents, teachers and caregivers to be prepared to handle emergencies effectively. Early intervention with proper first aid, often what makes a world of difference.

Let's take a look at a few commonly encountered paediatric emergencies.

Some of the more common Paediatric Emergencies

- **Choking:** Young children are prone to choking on food or small objects. Signs include difficulty breathing, coughing, or turning blue. For infants under one year, one should alternate back blows and chest thrusts. For older children, the Heimlich manoeuvre is recommended.
- **Severe Bleeding:** Active bleeding from cuts or wounds needs to be tended to immediately. Apply direct pressure with a clean cloth and elevate the area if possible. If bleeding doesn't stop, seek emergency help.
- **Burns and Scalds:** Extremely commonplace in homes, especially in kitchens and bathrooms. The burn should be cooled with running water for at least 10 minutes. Do not apply ice, creams, or oils. Cover the burn with a clean, non-fluffy cloth and seek medical attention if severe.
- **Seizures:** Febrile seizures, often triggered by high fevers, are common in children. You should lay the child on their side to prevent choking, remove nearby objects and time the seizure. Do not restrain the child or put anything in their mouth.
- **Breathing Difficulties:** Asthma, allergic reactions or infections like croup can lead to breathing issues. If a child is struggling to breathe, appears pale or blue, or is gasping for air, call emergency services immediately.



Some basic First Aid tips

Since paediatric emergencies happen without warning, it is good to know some basic first aid tips. Here are a few:

- **Stay Calm:** Your reaction can influence the child's response. Reassure them and speak gently.
- **Learn CPR:** Learning paediatric CPR can be life-saving in cases of cardiac arrest or drowning.
- **Call for Help:** Don't delay contacting emergency services if the situation seems serious.
- **Keep a First Aid Kit:** Stock it with essentials like bandages, antiseptics, gloves and child-specific medications.

Prevention is Key

Many emergencies can be avoided through child proofing, supervision and educating children about safety. Simple measures like installing safety gates, securing furniture and keeping hazardous items out of reach can prevent accidents.

Remember, being equipped with first aid knowledge and remaining vigilant can save lives during paediatric emergencies. So it is vital to regularly update first aid skills and be able to stay calm under pressure.