

FALLS, FRACTURES AND BLEEDING

FALLS

We all know that falling is something we do not want to do. There are only a few things we need to remember about falls, besides the fact that they hurt and they make us look really graceful.

1. Any fall greater than twice the persons height is considered a serious fall.
2. If the person became unconscious it is a serious fall.
3. If the head and/or neck were involved it is a serious fall. Have the person remain still and hold their head so that they do not move it. Call an ambulance. They will stabilize the head and neck until x-rays can rule out a fracture of the spinal column.

FRACTURES

Fractures are easy. If it wiggles and it shouldn't, stabilize it. If you are unsure whether there is a fracture or not, consider it fractured until an x-ray proves otherwise.

An arm can be stabilized with a magazine. Use a scarf or light weight towel to make a sling. Never tie anything over the area that you believe is fractured.

If it's the upper arm, tie the arm to the body to stabilize it and then you can use something like a tie to sling the wrist to the neck.

If it is a leg, you can use a broom or mop handle. Again, do not tie anything over the area that you think is fractured.

Unfortunately, in our older population hip fractures occur all too often. Signs of a hip fracture may include pain and tenderness to the area. You may also see a rotation of the leg and foot in one direction or the other. You can use a pillow to splint the hip. Do not move the person. Always immobilize the joint both above and below the fracture site.

You can use an ice pack to help reduce swelling. Never place ice directly on the skin.

BLEEDING

If there is an open wound, cover it with sterile gauze if you have it and if not, the cleanest thing you have will work. Avoid paper products.

There are 3 different types of bleeding:

1. capillary - oozing
2. venous - flowing
3. arterial - spurting with the heart beat

To control bleeding, we first use direct pressure using sterile gauze or the cleanest thing you have

available. Avoid paper products. If the gauze becomes saturated DO NOT REMOVE IT, as you can break away any clots that may have formed. Instead simply add to it.

Second, you can use elevation. Remember you are elevating above the heart level.

Tourniquets are a last resort in the case of bleeding that is life threatening. A tourniquet should be wide, like a belt. A tourniquet is only tightened until the bleeding is slowed and then direct pressure is used to help to stop the rest of the bleeding. Once a tourniquet is in place DO NOT remove or loosen it as that may cause any clots that have formed to break away.

NEVER remove an impaled object. Stabilize it in place.

If internal organs are showing do not apply pressure. Cover with a clean sheet only.

**As with any emergency, if you have any doubts call the ambulance
and/or seek medical attention.**

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