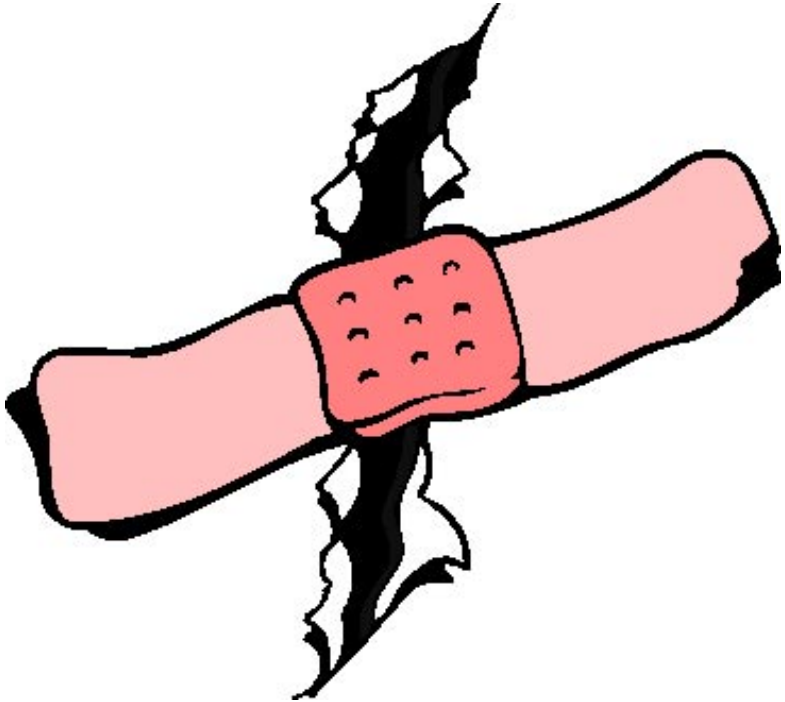




# **STREET FIRST AID:**

**'Cause you just never know'**



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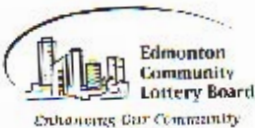
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We'd also like to say many thanks to the Edmonton Community Lottery Board for funding this project.

---

We'd like to dedicate this book to one of our own who didn't make it to see this in print.



This is for you Littlebird. Rest in peace.

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**Finally, thanks to all of you out there who take care of each other.**

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Please contact Streetworks if you wish to buy or reproduce this book or permission.

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# LIVING ON THE STREETS

Life on the streets can be pretty hard on a person. People manage to take care of themselves and others anyway.

This book is not an average first aid book.

It

was written by people who live on the streets to make it more real. Keep in mind that information changes as time goes on. We used the newest stuff we could find.

When it comes to first aid, you'll hear all kinds of different things to do from all kinds of people. This book will hopefully clear up crap you've heard and give you some pointers. Use your common sense and do the best you can with what you have.



This first aid book is pretty long. Try to read it in small chunks instead of all at once.

## FIRST THINGS FIRST

Remember

Before you can help anyone, you **MUST** ask them if they want your help. If they say no, try to stick around to see if they change their minds or pass out. When a person is passed out and can't be woken up, you can help them without asking.

**You can't force someone to take your help if they don't want it. Even if it looks like they really need it.**

- **Stay Calm** things can happen that are scary, BUT you can't help anyone if you're freakin' out.
- **Look Around** check out what's going on. Take buddy out of any danger. Make sure **you** aren't going to be in danger.
- **Calm Him Down** help buddy relax by talking to him and letting him know that you will do what you can to help.
- **TRY YOUR BEST** do what you can do, even if it's just a call for help.

---

# THE BASICS

Here are some points to keep in mind when you're helping others.



9-1-1 is a **FREE** call. Anywhere. Anytime. Any phone. Use a pay phone, cell phone, hotel phone, whatever. Just call.

## Calling 9-1-1

If you can't stay with the person after you call 9-1-1, write down any information the medics might need to know. Like the person's name or what happened and leave it there for the medics. If you can't stay, at least make the call! Leave the door unlocked or open a bit so the medics can go right in.

Don't move buddy if you think he might have hurt his neck or spine. Do your best to take care of whatever is wrong without moving him.

**WHY?**

Moving him can make his injury worse.

Use pressure to stop bleeding.

**WHY?**

Putting pressure on a bleed can help slow down the blood long enough for it to clot which helps keep it in the body.

## Universal Precautions:

### WHAT?

Keeping yourself safe from germs. One thing about diseases like HIV or Hepatitis, you can't tell who has them because people don't look sick.

Treat **everyone** as if they have germs in their blood.

No matter who you're helping, protect yourself. Keep other people's blood out of your body. If buddy's bleeding, try not to touch the blood with your bare skin if there's any chance you have a small cut. Use a clean towel or take off your shirt & bunch it up to hold over the bleeding part. You can also use dish gloves or a plastic bag over your hand.

## Infection

Germs are **everywhere**. Any wound can get infected. Germs don't cause trouble until they end up somewhere they shouldn't be, like in a wound.

### HOW?

Germs live in your mouth, on your skin, in the air and on other people. When these germs get into a wound, they cause infection.

Infections can get very serious. They can spread to the different layers of your skin. They can even spread to your blood and bones.

You need to see a doctor if an infection keeps getting worse. You don't want to lose an arm or leg or end up in the hospital.



## Signs of Infection:

- [ Bright red skin around the wound.
- [ Warm/hot to touch.
- [ Pain.
- [ Green/yellow crap coming out of the wound.
- [ Wound smells bad.
- [ Fever (high temperature like 38°C or 100.4°F).

---

## RESCUE BREATHING

What is it? Helping someone breathe by blowing air into their body with your mouth. The oxygen from the air gets pumped to their brain & other parts of their body by their heart.

Many different things can happen to make a person stop breathing (like an OD, head injury, etc). It's very important to check if a person is breathing. Look at buddy's chest and listen for breath sounds. Put your hand on his chest to feel for breaths. Put your face by buddy's mouth to feel for breaths. If he's not breathing, it only takes 4 minutes for brain damage to start. This brain damage can last forever.

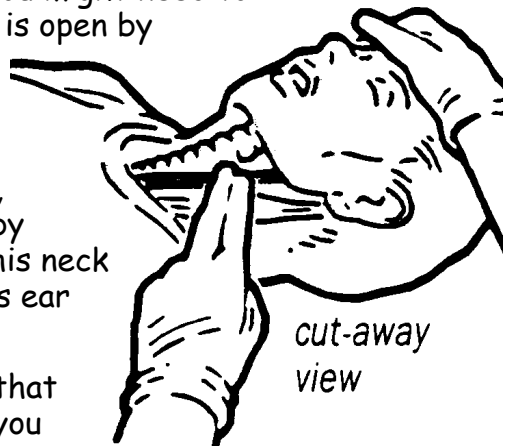
It's important to check breathing first - if buddy is slashed really bad, stopping the bleeding isn't going to get him very far if he's not breathing.



If you know that buddy is breathing, then take care of whatever is wrong.

If he's not breathing follow these steps:

- 
- Call 9-1-1 to get some help.
  - Push his head back gently so his chin points upward to try to open up his airway (make sure his mouth is clear).
  - Check for breathing again.
  - If he's still not breathing, give buddy 2 breaths by pinching his nose and putting your lips over his as tight as possible (make sure you have a good seal). Blow slowly into his mouth so you can see his chest rise.
  - If air doesn't go in, you might need to make sure his airway is open by moving his head a bit.
  - Once you're sure 2 breaths have gone in, check buddy's pulse by putting 2 fingers on his neck about 1 inch below his ear lobe.
  - If you're 100% sure that there's no pulse and you know CPR, you should start. If you don't know CPR, just wait with him until help gets there. You can do damage by thumping his chest or doing CPR if you don't know how.
  - If he does have a pulse, keep giving him breaths. Give buddy 1 breath about every 5 seconds until he starts breathing on his own or until someone else can help (you can count to five after each breath to help with timing).
  - Remember: Stay calm and try to do your best.



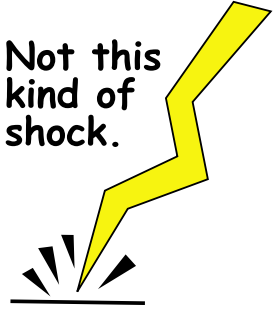


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# SHOCK

There's different kinds of shock. There's an emotional shock, like when your friend tells you her sister just died. Your friend is probably going to be a little dazed and upset for a while. She might need someone to talk to & someone to be with to help her through this.

Not this kind of shock.



Another kind of shock is how your body reacts when it is injured or in bad pain. It's very serious. You can DIE from this.

## Here's an example:

Buddy was hangin' at the Easy Lay Inn having a few drinks. On his way out, someone shanks him in the gut. He's losing a lot of blood. It's everywhere. Then he starts to act real confused, like he's not really sure where he is or what's going on. You touch him and feel that his skin is really cold and sticky. His heart's beating a mile a minute. Then he crashes to the floor, passed out. He's going deeper and deeper into shock and he might die unless someone helps.

## What is shock?

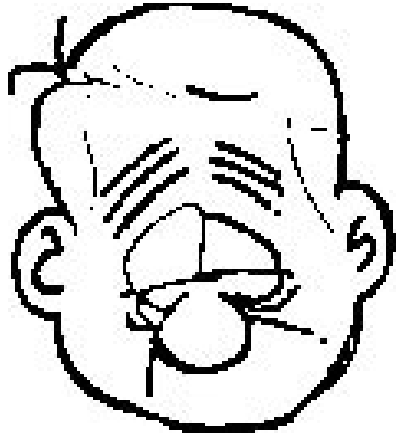
- ❖ A way the body may react when it's injured or in extreme pain.
- ❖ Very serious buddy can DIE from this.



---

## How do people get it?

- ❖ Losing a lot of blood or fluid (like if buddy is bleeding or burned really bad).
- ❖ Heart attack.
- ❖ Blood poisoning (from a really bad infection).
- ❖ Extreme pain.
- ❖ Spine injuries.



## What to look for:

- ❖ Cold, sticky skin.
- ❖ Really fast heartbeat.
- ❖ Puking.
- ❖ Buddy might be really thirsty.
- ❖ Passing out.
- ❖ Acting really tense or anxious.
- ❖ Light, fast breathing.
- ❖ Big black pupils in his eyes.

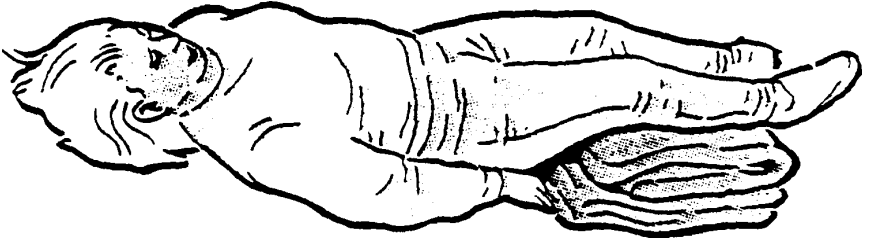
People in shock might have all or only a couple of these signs. People can be a little bit in shock or very deep in shock. It's important to try to do your best. Get help by calling 9-1-1. A person can go from being in light shock to deep shock in a short time.

## HELPING SOMEONE IN SHOCK

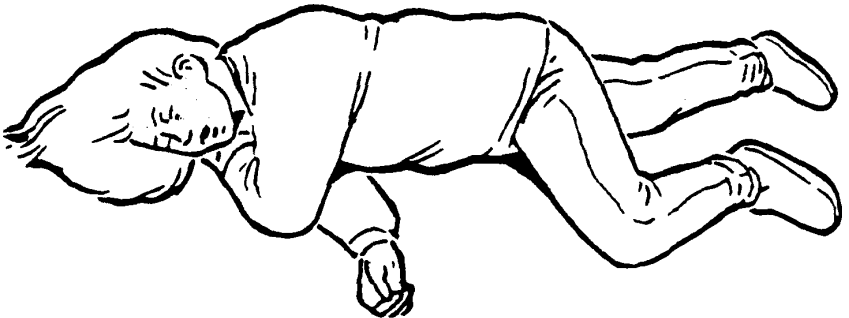
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Try to:

1. Make sure buddy can breathe (SEE RESCUE BREATHING); loosen tight clothing.
2. If he's bleeding try to stop it (SEE SLASHES).
3. Cover him with something to keep him warm.
4. If buddy's awake, put him on his back with his feet raised about 1 foot high. This helps his blood get to his brain & heart. (Remember not to move him if he has hurt his head or neck.)



If buddy's unconscious put him in the recovery position (pictured below ☺).



---

**NOTES:**

# SLASHING (A SLICING WOUND)

If the slash is on an arm or leg, hold it up as you press on it to help stop the bleeding.

Buddy's hangin' at the Easy Lay Inn having a few. It's time to go & wham, someone pulls out a shank and slashes him.

Remember to protect yourself from buddy's blood.

Along comes Lucky, he sees buddy down on his knees holding his leg. Lucky knows that the first thing he's gotta do is stop the bleeding or he's gonna be in bad shape. He takes off his shirt, bunches it up, and holds it over the slash wound, pressing hard to stop the bleeding. Lucky yells for someone to call 9-1-1, he doesn't want buddy to bleed to death.

If the bleeding doesn't stop or buddy's losing a lot of blood, he needs medical help right away.  
**CALL 9-1-**



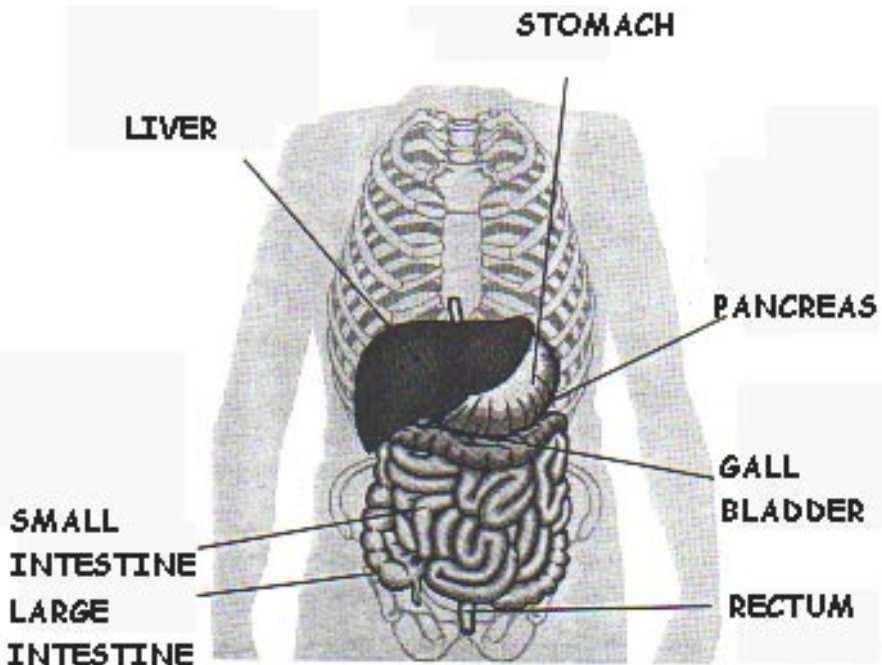
Use what you can find to help stop the bleeding.

The blood will already be starting to clot. Taking the shirt away can ruin this clot and make it harder to stop the bleeding.

up shirt starts to get soaked with blood, so he yells for someone to grab something (like a towel) to put over top without taking the bunched up shirt away.

Buddy says he won't let the medics help him. Lucky tries to talk him into it, but he won't budge.

After about 10 minutes of putting pressure on the slash wound, Lucky's sure the bleeding has stopped. He can tell because the blood hasn't soaked through the towel. The next thing he does is try to stop it from getting



---

Be gentle when taking off the shirt and towel so the bleeding doesn't start again.

infected. He takes the shirt and towel off gently to have a look. Lucky helps buddy into the hotel to get some soap and clean water from the bathroom taps.

Deep cuts where you can see the layers of the tissue or even bone should get stitches.

On the street it'll be hard to find clean bandages. Tell buddy to keep the wound as clean as he can with soap and water.

The bleeding helped clean out the slash wound. Lucky gently cleans the skin around the slash to stop germs from getting in. He uses a clean cloth to cover the slash wound to stop any more germs from getting in it.

It's a good idea to see a doctor. The wound might need stitches.

Organs like the liver or kidneys can get cut if buddy gets slashed in the gut. This is really serious and needs to be taken care of by a doctor.

# STAB WOUNDS

This isn't an easy one to take care of. It will be hard to put pressure on the wound without touching the knife blade. **You don't want to push the knife blade in any farther.**

Suppose buddy gets shanked & the knife handle breaks off with the blade stuck in buddy's gut.

Keep buddy calm, talk to him. Stay with him until help gets there if you can.

Lucky knows that he will not take the knife blade out of buddy. **WHY?** Because buddy will bleed more. There's also a chance that the blade might cut organs on its way out.



Lucky gets his old lady to phone 9-1-1 while he stays with buddy to keep him calm. He also takes off his shirt & rips it in two. Lucky puts each half on either side of (NOT ON) the knife blade. He puts pressure around the wound to help stop the bleeding being careful not to move or touch the knife blade.



When the ambulance gets there, Lucky tells the medics as much

information as he knows about buddy's health. The medics take over.

**Don't forget to wash your hands after helping someone.**



# SCRAPES

Germs love warm, dark, wet places. Keeping a scrape dry & clean helps it heal faster.

Use soap and water to wash scrapes and cuts at home.

Angel's working the streets. While standing on her corner, she spots a regular. As she runs to catch up with him, the heel of her shoe breaks off. Body meets pavement. Angel ends up with a nasty road rash down the side of her leg.

Wouldn't you know Lucky just happens to be nearby. He runs over to help Angel. Lucky looks at the scrape, he knows that he needs to clean it well with water. He gets some water from the gas station on the corner. He uses it to clean out the dirt and rocks. Lucky tells Angel that she should put a clean bandage on her scrape when she gets home.



**That needs more than a bandaid.**

Remember to keep an eye out for infection. See THE BASICS for signs of infection.

It's best to let scabs fall off on their own. Scabs help keep germs out of the wound. They also scar less if they fall off on their own. Don't pick your scabs.

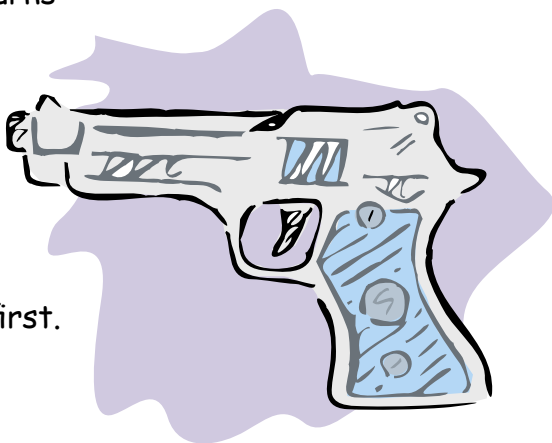
After the scrape dries, Angel doesn't need to cover it anymore. The air will keep it dry so it can heal.

Try to use something that won't stick to the scrape.

---

## GUNSHOT WOUNDS

Gunshot wounds are a little different. There will be a hole where the bullet goes in. Usually this hole will have burns around it. If the bullet leaves the body, there will be another hole somewhere else. The bullet might go straight through or it might bounce around in the body first.



Call 9-1-1 for help.

Make sure you're not in danger before you help someone else.

Bullets can rip through organs on the inside of the body. Buddy might not look like he's bleeding but he might be bleeding on the inside.

You need to stop the bleeding. Take your shirt off, bunch it up and hold it over the bullet wound.

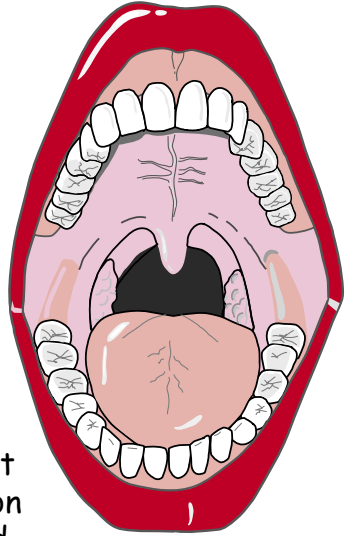
Buddy might go into shock from losing blood. Lay him on his back with his feet up (SEE SHOCK). Try to wait with him until help gets there.

# BITES AND PUNCHES

## Signs of infection:

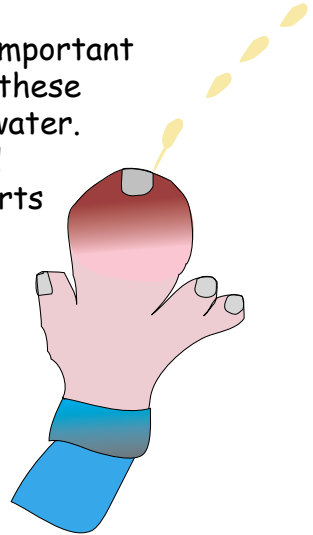
- Red skin around the wound.
- Warm/hot to touch.
- Green, white, or yellow pus coming out of it.
- Smells bad.
- Fever (38 C or 100.4 F).

Getting a bite from another person doesn't sound like a big deal, but it can be. Germs in a person's mouth are almost the same as the ones in their ass. These germs get into the wound & cause infection. A lot of people get infected wounds on their knuckles and fist from punching someone in the mouth.



To prevent infection, clean the wound with soap & water.

So it's really really important to keep wounds like these clean with soap and water. Infection can spread really fast. If it starts to look infected, see a doctor or nurse and get it looked at.



---

# BRUISES

Don't put ice right on your skin. Wrap it in a cloth first.

We've all had bruises. Some can be pretty bad. A bruise is when blood vessels under the skin are broken by something (like a punch).

As bruises heal, their color will change from black and purple to yellow and brown. If there's a lot of swelling around a bruise and you're in a lot of pain, you might need to see a doctor to see if there's a broken bone or bleeding inside.



If you're loaded you won't be able to feel the ice so be careful you don't freeze your skin.

You can put ice on a swollen spot for the first day or two to help it go down (a frozen bag of peas works great). Leave the ice for 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off. **DON'T** leave the ice on for longer than 15 minutes at a time. You could freeze your skin.

Think of **RICE**:

R- rest (rest the hurt part)

I ice (put ice on the hurt part)

C compression (put pressure on the injury by having it wrapped)

E elevation (raise the hurt part)

These 4 things help with the pain and swelling from bruises, sprains, and strains.

---

## MISCARRIAGE (losing a pregnancy)

All miscarriages should be treated at the hospital. A woman could lose a lot of blood and end up in serious trouble.

The baby (embryo) and the after birth (placenta) must both come out. If they don't, they can cause infection in the woman's body. **You won't be able to tell if both have come out.**

It's been about 7 weeks since Angel's last period. She thinks she's pregnant, but hasn't had a test done yet. She woke up this morning with some cramps. She went to the bathroom & noticed she had some heavy bleeding with clots in it. Angel puts in a tampon & phones her friend Sally.

Sally tells Angel to take out the tampon and put on a pad. If Angel is having a miscarriage, a pad will let the clots and tissue come out easier. She tells Angel that if she soaks through 2 pads in 1 hour, she should get to the hospital.

She also tells Angel that if the clots coming out are bigger than the size of a quarter (25¢) she should go to the hospital. These are signs that she probably is having a miscarriage.

**ACTUAL SIZE**

If you're bleeding while you're pregnant,



A pregnancy lasts about 38 to 40 weeks (around 9 months).

Miscarriage can happen any time in a pregnancy. They happen more in the first 3 months of the pregnancy.

Signs of infection:

- ☐ Fever (38°C or 100.4°F).
- ☐ Chills.
- ☐ Headache.
- ☐ Pain in the belly.
- ☐ Bad smelling flow.

a doctor should check you. It might not be serious, but it might be a sign that something's not right.

In the hospital, they may call it a spontaneous abortion. These are just medical words for a miscarriage.

Some women have miscarriages without even knowing they're pregnant.



You might not be able to tell if you're pregnant if you're using a lot and not eating because you may not get your period.

---

# SPRAINS AND STRAINS

Sometimes sprains and strains don't need medical help. BUT if it doesn't start to get better in 2 days, SEE THE DOCTOR.

Rest, ice, elevation, and pressure are important to heal sprains and strains.

It's hard to take the time to rest on the street. Try your best. When you can, stay off the sprain. Raise it and ice it.

Angel was out working one night wearing her stiletto heels. She stepped off the curb and twisted her ankle.

She sat down on the curb and took off her shoe. Her ankle was pretty swollen. It hurt a bit too. Sally (Lucky's girlfriend) came over to see what she could do to help. Angel could move her ankle up & down and from side to side. Sally thinks that she probably sprained it.

Sally knows that Angel should rest her ankle & put ice on it for 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off.

She should also sit with her ankle raised. These things help to bring down the swelling. Wrapping a tensor bandage around the ankle will also help (just remember not to wrap it too tight or you'll cut off the blood flow). The ankle will probably bruise as the night goes on.

Tylenol® (if you have a healthy liver) or aspirin® (if you have a healthy stomach) help with pain.



Don't put the ice on for longer than 15 minutes at a time. You don't want to freeze your skin.

---

A **sprain** is when a ligament gets torn (a ligament is like a cord that that holds one

Signs of a sprain or strain:

- Pain.
- Swelling.
- Bruising.
- Not able to move it as much.

bone to another bone). Ligaments can be torn just a little bit or very badly. In a serious sprain, a bone can be broken or dislocated (dislocation is when two bones that work together get pulled apart from each other). Serious sprains need to be treated by a doctor.

A **strain** is when the muscle gets stretched too far. Sprains & strains can hurt pretty bad and may take 3 to

A tensor bandage is wrapped too tight if:

- The toes turn blue and feel cold.
- The toes are numb and tingly, like that pins and needles feeling.



6 weeks to heal. The swelling should go down and the bruising should start to change from blue and purple to yellow and brown over the next few days. These are signs that it's healing.

A sprain could be as serious as a broken bone. Listen to the pain. The more pain there is chances are you need medical help.

If the sprain does not start to get better after 2 days you should see a doctor.



---

## FRACTURES (BROKEN BONES)

If a bone sticks out, DON'T try to push it back in.

Cover the bone with a clean, dry cloth (like a clean shirt). This keeps germs from getting in. GET HELP!

If you can't get to the hospital right away put ice on the swollen part. Use the ice 15 minutes on, 15 minutes off.

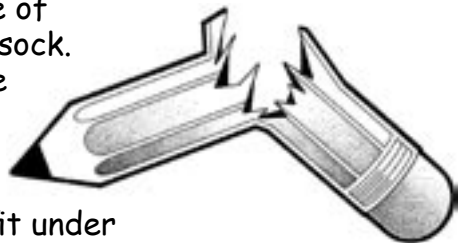
Buddy saw one of his friends getting rolled so he ran over to help. After he gave the guy a beating, he noticed the fingers on his right hand were really swollen and hurt like hell.

Buddy stopped at Lucky's place on his way home to see if he knew what to do about his hand.

Lucky looked at buddy's fingers and saw that they were very swollen. He asked him if he could move his fingers. Buddy couldn't.

Lucky thinks buddy might have broken his fingers. He looks closely for any bones sticking out of the skin. There aren't any. Lucky splints buddy's hand with a piece of cardboard from a case of beer and a sock.

He cuts the cardboard so it's small enough to fit under the palm of buddy's hand. Then he wraps his hand and the cardboard



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Signs that the splint is too tight:

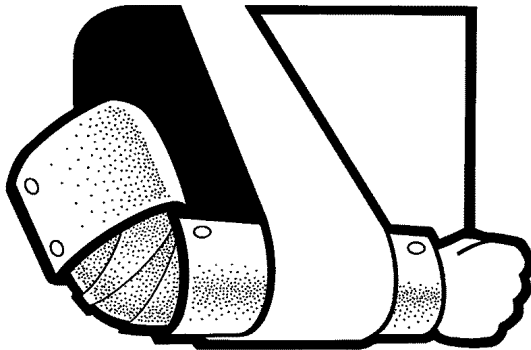
- Buddy's fingers are tingling or numb.
- His fingers are blue and cold.

together with a sock.

The splint helps keep buddy's hand straight. Lucky tells him not to move or bend his hand. Lucky checks to make sure the splint is not so tight that it cuts off the blood supply to his fingers. Lucky takes him to the hospital to see a doctor.

Don't cut your own cast off.

The splint is only meant to help buddy until he can have a doctor check his hand. Broken bones need to be treated by a doctor so they heal properly. Bones that heal crooked can bother you for the rest of your life.



---

## HYPOTHERMIA (Too Cold)

If you're drunk or high, you might not feel how cold you really are. This is dangerous.

It's the middle of September and buddy's sober and broke with no where to go. It looks like he'll be sleeping outside tonight. The air is cool and will get cooler when it gets dark.

Buddy does his best to bundle up, but all he has is his jean jacket. The ground is cold and wet. He settles in for the night.

Lucky is on his way home from a party when he trips over

It might be really hard to tell if someone's drunk or really has hypothermia. If it's really cold out and the person is not very warm to the touch, it's a good idea to get



Your body temperature needs to stay normal (about 37°C or 98.5°F) to keep everything in your body

buddy. Buddy gets up, he's shivering and he's acting like he's drunk. Lucky knows that cold weather like this can cause hypothermia. Hypothermia is when your body temperature goes down. People who have hypothermia might be shivering and talking like they're drunk even though they aren't. Hypothermia can even cause

If a person is wet and it's windy outside, they can get colder faster.

Don't give buddy any alcohol to drink. Alcohol opens up the blood vessels. Open blood vessels lose more heat.

Take buddy's wet clothes off and try to keep him from losing any more heat by covering him up with dry stuff.

someone to pass out and stop breathing.

Lucky decides to help buddy. He knows that he needs medical help as soon as possible. He takes off buddy's jean jacket because it's wet. He covers him up with his dry jacket. He tells buddy to lie down. Then he runs to the pay phone and calls 9-1-1.



**It's important to let the medical help warm up buddy. Lucky should only help keep him from getting any colder. If he tries to warm him up, he can cause serious heart problems for buddy.**

---

Don't give buddy coffee or tea with caffeine to drink. Caffeine makes your body lose water. Remember water helps your body keep its temperature normal.

If buddy were passed out from hypothermia, Lucky would need to check his breathing and pulse (SEE RESCUE BREATHING). If buddy weren't breathing, he would need to do Rescue Breathing.

People can freeze in cool weather too.

### **SURVIVAL TIPS:**

- Wear layers of clothing.
- Try to keep your clothes dry.
- Wear hats and mittens in the winter.

It's important to keep buddy lying down. If he moves around too much, he could have trouble with his heart.



**Hey, I don't think you're supposed to be blue!**



- If you're stuck outside in the cold, curl into a ball to keep your body heat. Try to find some kind of shelter.
- Newspapers and cardboard boxes help keep in some of your body heat.
- Cuddle up with someone else. 2 bodies have more heat than 1.
- Try not to drink booze outside when it's cold.

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## FROSTBITE



It's a cold night in January and buddy just finished a round of Kolt 54's with his friends at the rooming house. Feeling no pain, he heads home. He makes it as far as the empty lot across the street and passes out in the snow.

Lucky is on his way to the Easy Lay Inn to meet some friends when he sees buddy passed out in the snow. Just like he always does, Lucky decides to help.

Ears, fingers, and toes can get frostbite easily.

If you've had frostbite before, it's easier to get it again.

He wakes buddy up and realizes that he's quite drunk. Lucky knows that he has a chance of getting frostbite. Frostbite is when skin freezes. Skin that freezes all the way to the bone is very serious.

9-1-1 is a free call from any phone.

Lucky looks at buddy's bare hands and sees that they're white and waxy looking. He touches them and they feel hard. These are signs of frostbite.

Don't rub frostbite. You will cause more damage. The water in your skin cells turns to ice crystals when it freezes. The sharp edges of these crystals rips the skin when you rub frostbite.



Lucky's not sure how bad the frostbite is, but he knows that if he doesn't do something it will get worse. He decides to call 9-1-1 first to get help. Then he HOLDS buddy's hands in between his own, being careful not to rub them. He does this until the ambulance gets there.

### Signs of serious frostbite:

- Red or white skin (white skin is a sign that the frostbite is more serious).
- Black skin (need to get to a hospital right away- this is a sign that the skin is dead).
- Cold hard skin.



- 
- No feeling in that area.
  - Blisters.

If a person's legs and feet are frozen, don't let them walk.

**If you can't get medical help, you can help thaw frostbite. You must be sure that you have everything you need before you do this. Never re-warm someone if you can't keep them warm after.**



**Prevent Frostbite:**

- Wear layers of clothes.
- Wear hats and mittens.
- Wear dry socks.
- Don't go outside with wet hair.
- Make sure you have somewhere warm to be if you're drunk or high.

You need a warm, comfortable place. Carefully take the clothes off the frozen area. Get a bowl big enough to put the frozen area into so it's completely covered with water. Fill the bowl with water that feels warm (NOT HOT) when you test it with your elbow. Put the whole frozen area into the water. Add more water as it starts to cool off. Try to keep the temperature of the water the same. Keep the frozen part in the water until it turns pink or until it doesn't seem to get any better. This can take a long time, like maybe a  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour or more. This will also be very painful so remember to talk to the person to keep him calm. When the frozen part is thawed, you can dry off the area carefully and cover any wounds with clean, dry cloths. If there are any blisters, DO NOT pop them. Popped blisters are an opening for

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If frostbite is thawed and then the person goes back into the cold right away, the second frostbite will do more damage. Make sure the person has a warm place to stay

infection.

Get the person some medical help as soon as you can.

Remember when frostbite is serious, it's best to get medical help by calling 9-1-1.



Don't put snow on frostbite. It only makes it worse.

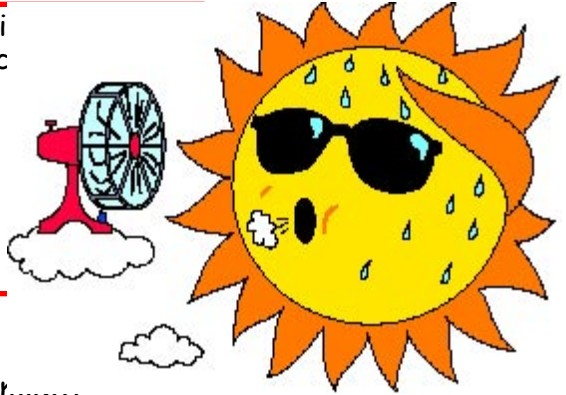
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# HEAT EXHAUSTION (Too Hot)

Heat exhaustion is when your body loses too much water from sweating. Working outside on a hot day without enough water to drink can easily lead to heat exhaustion. Heat exhaustion comes before Heatstroke.

## Signs of heat exhaustion

- Sick to your stomach
- Headache.
- Sweating.
- Puking.
- Sore muscles.
- Very tired.
- Pale skin.



Talk gently and reassure them. Tell them what you're doing so they don't think you're trying to hurt them.

You may... feel sick to your stomach and even puke. You also might have a headache and feel dizzy.

When you're helping someone with heat exhaustion, tell them what you're doing and why. Help them drink lots of water. Help the person to lie down in a cool, shady place.

Put their feet up on a tree stump or

## Don't let it happen:

- Wear a hat on hot, sunny days.
- Drink lots of water.
- Sit in the shade if you're drinking.
- Drink water in between drinks of booze.
- Don't let your friends pass out in the sun.



whatever else you can use. Take off any extra clothes that might be keeping them warm.

These things will help cool the body down and stop the person from getting worse.

If the person's passed out, don't give them anything to drink. Call 9-1-1 and wait until help gets there if you can.

Fair-haired people with pale skin will get heat exhaustion or heatstroke faster.

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## HEATSTROKE (Sunstroke)

Calling 9-1-1 might be the only thing you can do. If you can, stay with buddy until help gets there.

Heatstroke is when the body gets so hot on the outside and the inside that you can die. It's when the body can't control its own temperature anymore. Heatstroke can cause brain damage or death.



It's really hot outside on a summer day.

You can fan buddy with cardboard to keep him cool.

Buddy scraped up enough money for a bottle of whiskey. He and a few friends were drinking

it in the empty lot across from a rooming house.

Drinking booze causes people to lose water and dries out the body.

Buddy gets pissed and passes out on the grass. His friends laugh and move on to the bar. They think he'll just sleep it off and meet them at the bar later.

Lucky looks out his rooming house window and sees buddy lying in the lot in the sun with the empty whiskey bottle next to him. He knows that on a hot day like today, buddy can get heatstroke. Lucky also knows that drinking will make it worse. Passing out in the sun on a really hot day can lead to heatstroke, especially

Signs of heatstroke:

- ☐ Hot skin.
- ☐ Dry skin (no sweating).
- ☐ Red skin.
- ☐ Fast heartbeat.
- ☐ Noisy breathing.
- ☐ Can't sit still.
- ☐ Headache.
- ☐ Dizzy.
- ☐ Passed out.
- ☐ Seizures.
- ☐ Confused.

if someone's drunk.

Lucky decides to check over and he notices that buddy's face is red and his skin is hot when he touches it. Lucky's not sure if he's passed out from drinking or from the heat. He knows that buddy might die if he can't get his temperature down.



He sees someone walking by and yells

for them to call 9-1-1. He finds his buddy in the recovery position (SEE RESCUE BREATHING). Then he quickly runs to his place, grabs a few towels and puts cold water on them. He runs back and covers buddy with the towels. Lucky waits until help gets there.



Drinking lots of water helps keep the body temperature normal.

Someone with heatstroke may not be passed out. They might be able to tell you that they have a headache and feel dizzy. They also might not be able to sit still. These are signs that someone has heatstroke.

Try to keep buddy in a shaded area. If you need to, make your own shade by hanging your shirt on some branches.

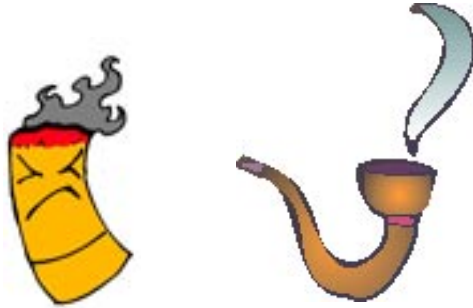
It would be a good idea to get help by calling 9-1-1. The person can pass out very fast if they have these signs.



# BURNS

Skin will keep burning until you stop it. A first-degree burn can become a third degree burn even after the heat source is taken away. It's important to stop the burning as soon as possible. Remember to **Cool It.**

Buddy was using Lucky's stove to cook up some dope. After a couple hits, buddy started getting sloppy. He slipped and fell into the stove burning his arm.



Lucky knows he must stop the burning. He fills the kitchen sink with cool water from the tap & has buddy stick his arm in it.

You can put wet cloths on a burn if you don't have a sink. Use the snow bank if you're outside in the winter (watch that you don't freeze his arm).

Lucky noticed that the burn started to blister. The blisters on buddy's arm are about the size of a Toonie (a silver dollar if you're in the States).

## ACTUAL SIZE

This is a sign that the burn is more serious. Lucky knows that he should NOT pop the blisters. Blisters are the body's way of protecting itself. A popped blister is an opening for germs to get in and cause infection. Buddy should be seen by a nurse or a doctor.





Don't try to take off any clothes that are stuck to the burn.

Lucky then puts a clean, dry piece of sheet on top of the burn until he can get to a clinic or hospital. Lucky uses a sheet because it won't stick to the burn very much.

Burns cause swelling. Take off any jewelry near the burn.



1<sup>st</sup> degree - burns through the top layer of skin.  
2<sup>nd</sup> degree - burns through more layers of skin.  
3<sup>rd</sup> degree - burns through skin and other tissue.

Never ever put butter, oil, alcohol, or vaseline on a burn. These will make the burn worse. Don't put any creams or lotions on the burn unless the doctor or nurse tells you to.



It's really important to get help for serious burns. Burns can get infected very easily. Burns can also cause shock (remember this from SHOCK-page 7).

**Really serious burns that need help:**

Try to use something that won't stick to wounds when you cover them.

Don't put running water on the burn. This can rip off the skin and make the burn worse.

↳ Burns that cover a lot of skin (if the burn

Burns are serious because they can get infected really easy. People with large, deep burns can go into shock very easily.



If you catch fire, remember **STOP DROP** to the ground & **ROLL** to put the fire out.

Electrical burns are very serious and need medical help. People can be burned through the inside of their body with an electrical burn.

is bigger than the size of the palm of your hand).

- ì If there are burns in more than one spot on the body.
- ì If the skin peels away.
- ì If the burn is so deep that there is NO pain.
- ì If the blisters are bigger than the size of a quarter.

A burn where there is no pain means that the burn has destroyed the nerve endings. This is very serious.

**ACTUAL SIZE**

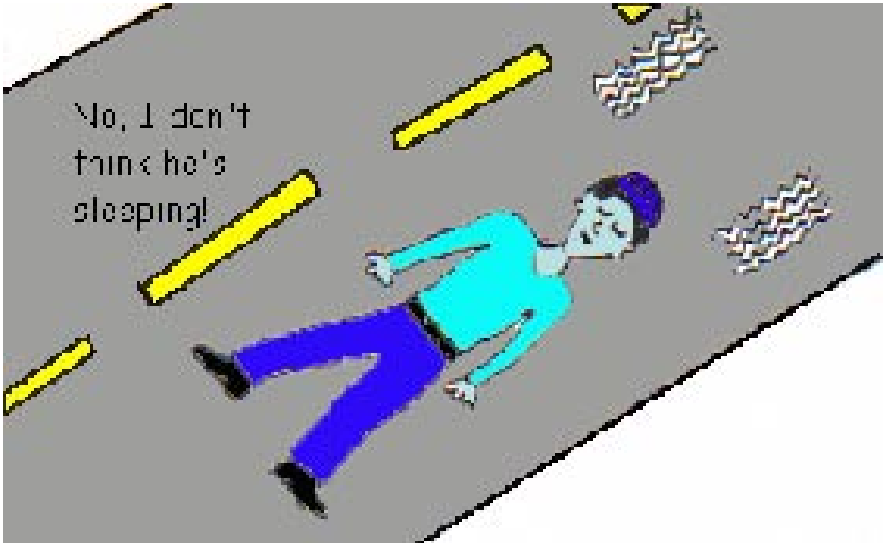


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# UNCONSCIOUSNESS

Remember to do your best. Try to stay calm.

So far Lucky has helped buddy out in some pretty nasty situations. Each time, Lucky was able to find out what happened to buddy. Lucky was able to use his smarts about each case to help him. BUT, what if you come across someone



Anything could have happened. You might not be able to tell just by looking at someone. Getting help is a safe thing to do.

who is unconscious and you don't know what happened?

Unconsciousness is when a person is alive, but won't wake up. Shock, diabetes (problems with the body's blood sugar level), hypothermia, getting knocked out can all cause someone to be unconscious. If you find someone unconscious and you don't know what happened, CALL 9-1-1 for help.



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After calling for help, try to wake up the



person by saying hello in each ear loudly. If they don't wake up, squeeze their shoulders with your hands.

Remember to be careful about moving someone. You don't know if they have a spine or neck injury.

Don't worry if you called for help and the person is not unconscious. It's better to be safe than sorry.

If the person doesn't wake up they're probably unconscious. Check their breathing. If they're not breathing, start rescue breathing. Check for a pulse (SEE RESCUE BREATHING). If there is no pulse and **ONLY IF YOU KNOW CPR**, start. Check for any bleeding and do your best to stop it (SEE SLASHES). Make sure there aren't any tight clothes around the person's neck, chest, or waist. Take care of the person until help gets there.

If the person is breathing, has a pulse, and isn't bleeding anywhere, put them in the recovery position (SEE SHOCK), but not if they have a head or back injury.

Anyone who has been unconscious, even if they wake up, should see a doctor.

**WHY?**

There might be some serious things going on in the person's brain or body that are life threatening.

# GOING UNDER (OD)

Salt shots and cold showers do not help when someone ODs.



Try to stay with the person. If you do take off, make sure you tell the 911 people what drug was used.

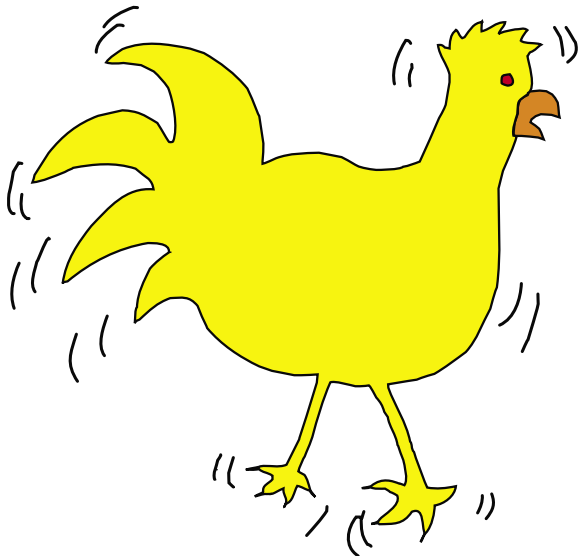
Telling the medical help what drug was used helps Buddy. Different drug ODs get treated in different ways.

Buddy and Fifi, his girlfriend, went to a new dealer to buy some dope. Fifi said they should do a tester first.

Buddy didn't want to wait, so he did a full shot. Fifi decided to watch to see how he was doing before she did a hit.

Next thing she knew, buddy was doing the chicken. She knew that he was going under. She called 9-1-1 to get medical help on the way. Buddy went unconscious. Fifi checked to make sure that he was still breathing. He was (SEE RESCUE BREATHING). She put him into the recovery position (SEE SHOCK). She waited with him until the medical

Always try to do a tester first if you're not sure of the purity of the drug.



Don't give them anything to eat or drink. They could choke.

If they puke, make sure they don't choke on it.

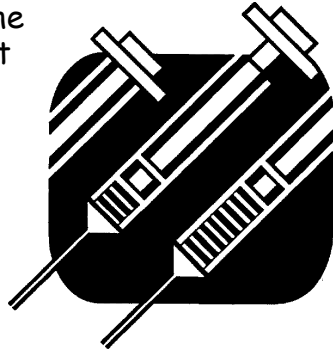
Sometimes a person's tongue can fall back against their throat and make them stop breathing.

help got there so she could tell them what drug he used.

If the person who OD's is still conscious (awake), try to keep them awake by talking to them.

If they've stopped breathing, call 9-1-1 right away. Start rescue breathing (SEE RESCUE BREATHING).

If they're unconscious and still breathing, make sure they have nothing in their mouth that could block their breathing. Don't try to force their mouth open. Put them into the recovery position.



### **Prevent Overdose:**

- Leave some time in between each fix.
- Use  $\frac{1}{2}$  the normal shot if you don't know the purity.
- Don't use alone, have someone with you. Don't fix at the same time; wait to see how your buddy is first.
- Fix in a comfortable, safe place.
- Loosen or take off the tie before banging it in.
- Try other ways of using (like swallowing pills, snorting, and smoking).
- If you want to quit using, there are places that will help. Talk to your needle exchange or check the phone book.

# SEIZURES

Signs of a seizure:

- ☐ Zoned out.
- ☐ Falls to the ground.
- ☐ Eyes roll back.
- ☐ Jerking arms & legs.
- ☐ Drooling.
- ☐ Person might piss or shit

A seizure or doing the chicken is when the electricity in your brain goes wacky and misfires. There are different kinds of seizures and they can be caused by different things.

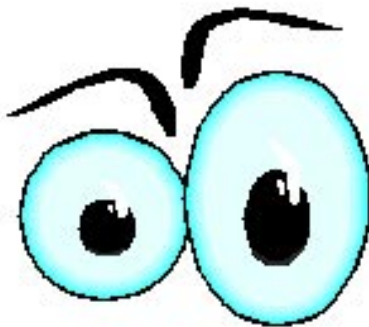
A person having a seizure might act spaced out, like they're not really there. You also might see someone fall to the ground their eyes rolling upwards and their arms and legs jerking around.

A seizure looks scary, but most of the time people don't have any serious damage from them. They can hurt themselves if they fall to the ground & crack their head during the seizure.



## Call 9-1-1:

- ☐ If the seizure lasts longer than 2 minutes.
- ☐ If the person has more than one seizure.
- ☐ If the person has never had a seizure before.
- ☐ If you don't know the person having the seizure.



Seizures usually last only a few seconds up to 2 minutes.

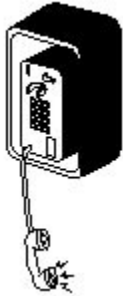
**IF the seizure lasts longer than 2 minutes or the**

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person has more than one seizure  
you should call 9-1-1.

They will need medical help to stop  
the seizure. They can die from  
having a seizure that doesn't stop.

You should also call  
9-1-1 for help if you don't know the



person having  
the seizure

or if you  
know that

the person has never had a seizure  
before. The seizure might be the  
only sign of a brain injury. This  
person would need medical help right  
away.



Do's & Don'ts when helping someone

### **Seizures can be caused by:**

- ◆ Going under (OD).
- ◆ Epilepsy (when someone has seizures regularly).
- ◆ Brain injury.
- ◆ Withdrawal from drugs or alcohol.
- ◆ Not enough air to the brain.
- ◆ When someone with epilepsy doesn't take their medicine.
- ◆ Many other things.



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having a seizure:

**Do**



- Protect the person's head (put something soft under it like a jacket or your hands).
- Call for help.
- Time the seizure (look at a clock or watch, even guess if you have to).
- Talk calmly to the person (tell them what happened, they probably won't know what's going on).

**Don't**



- Put anything in their mouth (they could choke or bite you).
- Hold their body tightly (just let them do the chicken, holding them can hurt them or you).
- Freak out (be calm, just do your best).
- Throw them in the shower or give them a salt shot.

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# AFTER ALL IS SAID AND DONE

There's a lot of stuff in this book. Some is common sense, some is stuff you already know, and some will be new to you. We hope that even if you don't read the whole thing, you'll keep it around, just in case.



Remember, you're only human. Do the best you can with what you have, even if all you can do is call for help. Trust yourself.

## GOOD THINGS TO KNOW

9-1-1 is a free call. No matter what phone you're using (a pay phone, hotel phone, cell phone, whatever).

You don't always need an ambulance or the emergency room. Try to see your own doctor or go to a medical clinic for things that aren't as serious.



Emergency rooms will see people who are the sickest first. If you aren't very sick, you might have to wait for a while.

Try to be strong. Sometimes people who live on the street get a hard time by hospitals and doctors. Usually if you show respect, you'll get it back. A lot of health care professionals don't have a clue what's it like to live on the street. They also might be afraid to ask questions. Be honest and help them understand where you're at.

Places to go for information or help:

- Your local needle exchange. • Community health clinic.
- Your own doctor. • St. John Ambulance
- Check the yellow and white pages in the phone book for phone numbers and hotlines (for detox, counseling, etc).

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**Natural Helpers 2000**  
**Streetworks, Edmonton, Alberta**

**Boyle Street Co-op**

1116 - 105 Ave.  
Edmonton, AB  
T5H 0K2  
Ph: (780) 424-4106 ext. 210  
Fax: (780) 425-2205



**Boyle McCauley Health  
Centre**

10628 - 96 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5H 2J2  
Ph: (780) 422-7333