

SHOCK

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Is usually the result of a pre-existing illness or injury. Shock is a circulation problem when the body's tissues do not get sufficient amount of blood resulting in physiological shock. Physiological shock is caused by conditions such as internal or external bleeding, burns, dehydration, cardiovascular incidents and other situations involving bodily fluids. This can be serious because it can cause the brain and other organs not to function properly. An emergency situation usually involves some degree of shock. The best first aid treatment for shock is to treat the primary injury or condition that has caused it, and then follow-up with keeping the casualty warm and handing them over to medical aid as soon as possible.

The casualty is more likely to go into shock if he/she is; diabetic, epileptic, infected with disease or infection, poisoned or overdosed on drugs. Pain, anxiety and fear don't cause shock but they can amplify or intensify the shock.

Allergic reactions - this can affect breathing, the way the heart functions etc.

Bleeding (*internal or external*) - because there is not enough blood to fill blood vessels

Burns - loss of bodily fluids

Being crushed - loss of blood and not enough blood to fill blood vessels

Heart attack - the heart is weak at this point therefore is unable to pump blood properly

Spinal cord or nerve injuries - the brain can no longer control the size of the blood vessels and the blood does not get to the tissues the way its supposed to.

Symptoms of Shock

Thirsty

Dizzy

Afraid

Confused

Weak

Anxious

Restless

Disoriented

Signs of Shock

Level of consciousness changes

Irregular breathing

Discoloration in lips, tongue, earlobes, fingernails

Skin discoloration

How to minimize shock:

- Give first aid to the injury or illness that first caused the shock in order to eliminate or minimize shock
- Try to keep casualty calm and constantly reassure them
- Be gentle with the casualty to minimize pain which minimizes chances of getting shock
- Loosen any tight clothing (collar, sleeves, belt)
- Make sure casualty is at a comfortable temperature
- Moisten casualty's lips if they seem dry but take care not to give anything to drink or eat as this may further complicate the original or underlying injury or illness
- Place casualty in the best position based on their condition
- Continue to give care, reassure, be calm until handing the situation over to the paramedics.