READY AT HOME · VOLUME 5

First Aid

Step-by-step emergency care

What to look for, and what to do, step by step
CPR, the recovery position, choking, bleeding, burns
A pharmacy first-aid kit for about €30



THE SERIES

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8 Fire Safety & Security	**9** Communications	**10** Grab Bags & Kits	**11** Pantry & Stockpile	**12** Outdoor Skills	**13** Kids, Morale & Wellbeing	**14** Offline Knowledge &	**15** Other Emergencies

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How to use this book

This is a reminder of what you'd learn on a first-aid course, not a replacement for one. A half-day course (Red Cross, Order of Malta, St John Ambulance, or a local Community First Responder group) is the single best thing you can do. In any emergency, call **112 or 999** early: the call-taker will talk you through each step, including CPR.

1. The first minute

When someone has collapsed or is badly hurt, work through these steps in order. They keep you calm and make sure nothing important is missed.

D	R	S	A	B	C	D
Danger	**Response**	**Shout**	**Airway**	**Breathing**	**CPR**	**Defib**
Make sure it's safe for you to help. Don't rush in.	Speak loudly and tap their shoulders: "Can you hear me?"	Get someone to call 112 or 999 and fetch the nearest defibrillator (AED).	Gently tilt the head back and lift the chin.	Look, listen and feel for up to 10 seconds.	No normal breathing? Start chest compressions.	Switch the AED on. It talks you through every step.

Figure 1. DRSABCD: the first-minute checklist.

2. Signs to look for

These are the signs that tell you which page to turn to. You don't need to work out what's wrong; just match what you see.

What you notice	What it means for you	Go to
Doesn't respond to your voice or a tap, **and** isn't breathing, or only gives occasional gasps	They need CPR now. Gasps are a reflex, not normal breathing.	Section 3
Doesn't respond, but **is breathing normally**	Keep the airway open while you wait for help.	Section 4
Clutching throat, can't speak or cough, may turn blue around the lips	Something is blocking the airway.	Section 5
Blood flowing or spurting fast from a wound	Press on it straight away.	Section 6
Pale, cold, clammy skin, fast breathing, confused	Their circulation needs support.	Section 6
Burn or scald	Cool it with running water for 20 minutes.	Section 7
Face drooping, arm weak, speech slurred	Possible stroke: call 112.	Section 8
Chest pain or pressure spreading to arm, jaw or back	Possible heart attack: call 112.	Section 8
Swelling of lips or tongue, wheeze, after a food, sting or medicine	Possible severe allergy: use their auto-injector, call 112.	Section 8

3. CPR for adults

Start CPR when someone **doesn't respond and isn't breathing normally**. Starting quickly gives the best possible chance, and you can't make things worse by trying. The call-taker will count with you.



1. Call 112 or 999 and put the phone on speaker. Ask someone to bring an AED.
2. Kneel beside them on the floor. Place the heel of one hand in the centre of the chest, the other hand on top, fingers linked.
3. Keep your arms straight with your shoulders over your hands.
4. Press down firmly, 5-6 cm, then let the chest come fully back up.
5. Go at 100-120 a minute: the beat of 'Staying Alive'.
6. If you've been trained and are willing, give 2 rescue breaths after every 30 compressions. If not, keep doing compressions only. Both help.
7. Keep going until the AED is ready, help takes over, or they start breathing normally.



Using a defibrillator (AED)

AEDs are designed for anyone to use. Open the lid or press the green button and it gives clear spoken instructions.

- Stick the pads on bare skin exactly where the pictures show.
- Make sure nobody is touching the person when it says 'analysing' or 'shock'.
- Restart compressions as soon as it tells you to.
- Find your nearest AEDs now: pharmacies, GAA clubs, churches and shops often have one.

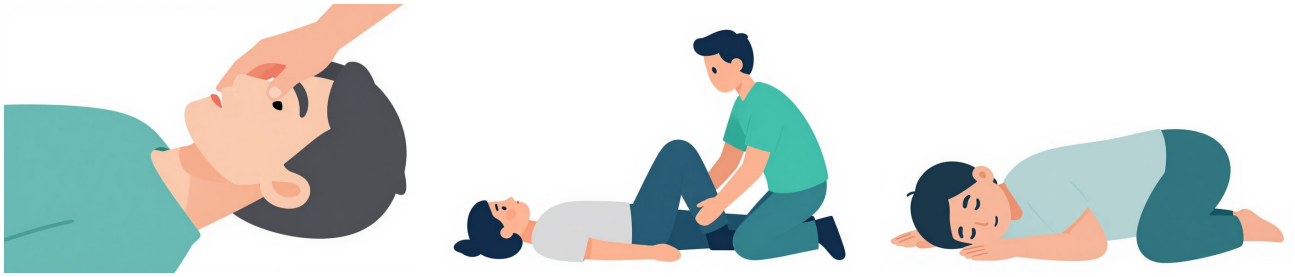
Children and babies

	Child (1 year to puberty)	Baby (under 1 year)
Begin with	5 rescue breaths, then 30 compressions	5 rescue breaths (your mouth over the baby's mouth and nose)
Hands	One hand (or two), centre of chest	Both thumbs on the centre of the chest, hands around the chest
Depth	About one-third of the chest	About one-third of the chest
Rate	100-120 a minute, 30 to 2 (15 to 2 if trained in child CPR)	100-120 a minute, 30 to 2 (15 to 2 if trained)
AED	Child pads or setting if there is one; adult pads otherwise	Yes: child pads or setting if there is one, one pad on the front, one on the back

If you are on your own with a child, call on speaker and start straight away. With no phone, give one minute of CPR before going for help.

4. The recovery position

For someone who **doesn't respond but is breathing normally**. Lying on their side keeps the airway clear and lets fluid drain from the mouth.



Open the airway: one hand on the forehead, two fingers lifting the chin.

Kneel beside them. Bring the far arm across, bend the far knee, and roll them towards you.

On their side: top knee bent to stop them rolling, head tilted back, hand under cheek.

Figure 2. From back to side.

1. Kneel beside them. Take off glasses and remove bulky items from pockets.
2. Place the arm nearest you out at a right angle, elbow bent, palm facing up.
3. Bring the far arm across their chest and hold the back of that hand against their cheek.
4. With your other hand, pull up the far knee so the foot is flat on the floor.
5. Keeping their hand pressed to their cheek, pull on the knee to roll them towards you onto their side.
6. Bend the top leg so hip and knee are at right angles. Tilt the head back slightly to keep the airway open.
7. Stay with them and keep checking their breathing until help arrives. If it stops being normal, roll them onto their back and start CPR.

> **If you think they've hurt their neck or back**
> Only move them if you need to, for example to keep the airway clear or if they're in danger. Support the head in line with the body as you roll them.

5. Choking

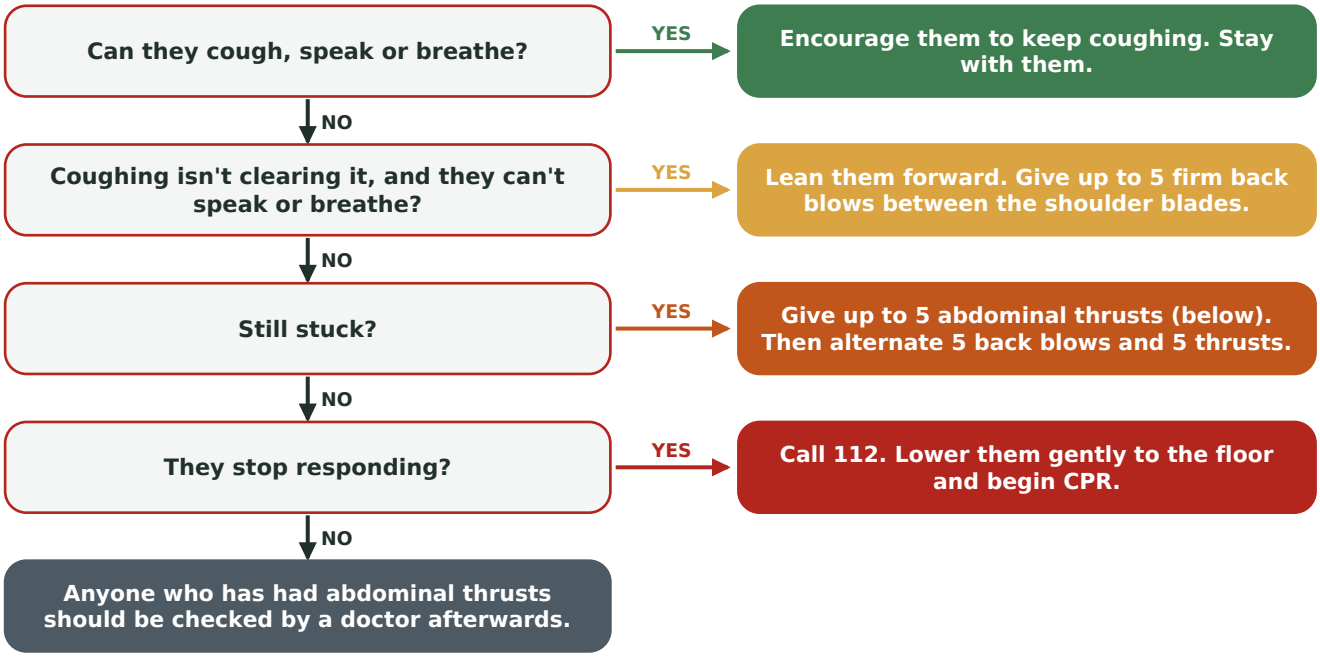
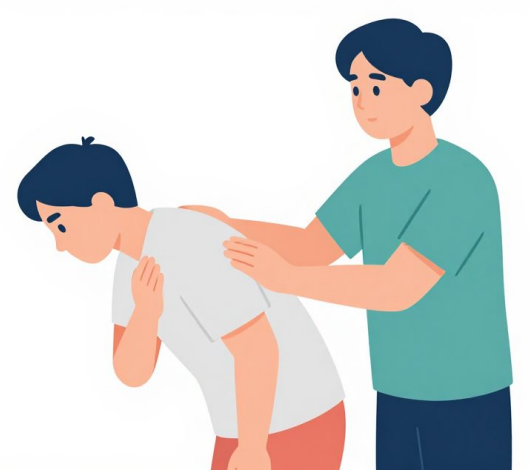


Figure 3. Choking in adults and children over 1 year.



Back blows: lean them well forward, heel of hand between the shoulder blades.



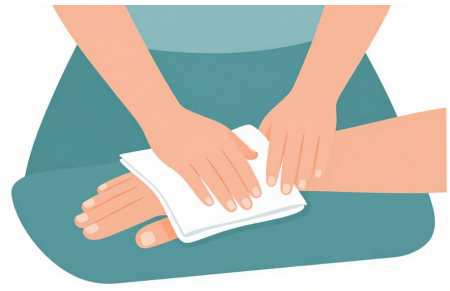
Abdominal thrusts: stand behind, fist just above the belly button, pull sharply in and up.



Babies under 1 year

1. Lay the baby face down along your forearm, head lower than the body, supporting the jaw.
2. Give up to 5 back blows with the heel of your hand.
3. Turn them face up and give up to 5 chest thrusts: hands around the chest, both thumbs on the centre of the chest, pressing sharply.
4. Never use abdominal thrusts on a baby. Keep repeating, and call 112 if it doesn't clear.
5. If they stop responding, call 112 and begin baby CPR.

6. Bleeding and shock



Heavy bleeding

1. Call 112. Put on gloves if you have them.
2. Press firmly on the wound with a pad or clean cloth. Use both hands and lean your weight in.
3. For a deep wound, pack gauze or cloth into it and keep pressing.
4. Don't lift the pad to look. If blood soaks through, add more on top.
5. Bandage firmly over the pad. Keep them lying down and warm.

Making a field dressing

A trauma (Israeli-type) bandage combines the pad and the bandage. If you don't have one, improvise: a folded clean tea towel or sanitary pad as the pad, held with a crepe bandage, a strip of sheet or cling film wrapped firmly round. It should be tight enough to keep pressure on, not so tight that fingers or toes beyond it go blue or numb.



Tourniquets

Only for very heavy bleeding from an arm or leg that firm pressure isn't controlling.

- Place it 5-7 cm above the wound, never over a joint.
- Twist the windlass until the bleeding stops. It is usually uncomfortable; that's expected.
- Lock the windlass and note the time on the strap.
- Leave it on. Paramedics or the hospital will take it off.
- Buy a genuine CAT or SOF-T tourniquet; cheap copies can snap.



Shock

After blood loss, burns or a severe allergic reaction, the body may not get enough circulation. Look for pale, cold, clammy skin; fast, shallow breathing; a fast, weak pulse; thirst; confusion or sleepiness.

- Call 112 and deal with the cause (e.g. press on the bleeding).
- Lie them down and raise their legs if that doesn't hurt them.
- Keep them warm with coats or a blanket. Loosen tight clothing.
- Nothing to eat or drink. Talk to them calmly and keep checking their breathing.

7. Burns and scalds



1. **Cool** under cool running water for 20 minutes, starting as soon as possible. It still helps up to 3 hours later.
2. **Remove** rings, watches and clothing near the burn, unless stuck to the skin.
3. **Cover** loosely with cling film laid on (not wrapped), or a clean plastic bag over a hand.
4. **Keep warm**: cool the burn, not the person. Watch small children for shivering.
5. **Avoid** ice, butter, toothpaste, creams and fluffy dressings. Don't burst blisters.

Get medical help for

Burns bigger than the person's palm, deep or white/charred burns, burns to the face, hands, feet, groin or joints, chemical and electrical burns, and any burn on a baby, young child or older person.

8. Medical emergencies

Stroke: think FAST

F — FACE
Has one side of the face drooped? Can they smile evenly?

A — ARMS
Can they lift both arms and keep them up?

S — SPEECH
Is their speech slurred or muddled?

T — TIME
Call 112 straight away. Note the time it started.

Heart attack

Look for chest pain, pressure or tightness, often spreading to the arm, jaw, neck or back, with breathlessness, sweating or feeling sick. Women, older people and people with diabetes sometimes have milder or unusual symptoms such as tiredness or indigestion-like pain.

- Call 112 straight away. An ambulance is safer than driving them in.
- Help them sit comfortably, often half-sitting with knees bent.
- If they aren't allergic to it, give one 300 mg aspirin to chew slowly and swallow.
- If they stop responding and aren't breathing normally, begin CPR and get an AED.

Seizures

DO

- Note the time it starts
- Move hard or sharp objects away
- Cushion their head
- When it stops, use the recovery position
- Stay until they're fully alert

DON'T

- Hold them down
- Put anything in their mouth
- Give food or drink until fully alert
- Leave them alone

Call 112 if it lasts more than 5 minutes, it's their first seizure, they're injured, another one follows, or they don't come round.

Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)

Signs: swelling of the lips, tongue or throat; wheeze or difficulty breathing; a hoarse voice; feeling faint; often within minutes of a food, sting or medicine.

1. Use their adrenaline auto-injector (EpiPen, Jext, Anapen) into the outer thigh, through clothing if needed. Hold it in place for the time shown on the device.
2. Call 112 and say 'anaphylaxis'.
3. Lie them down with legs raised. If breathing is hard, let them sit up. Don't let them stand or walk.
4. If they're no better or getting worse after 5 minutes, use a second auto-injector in the other thigh.
5. If they stop responding and aren't breathing normally, begin CPR.

9. Everyday injuries



Nosebleed

Sit down and lean **forward** (not back). Pinch the soft part of the nose firmly for 10-15 minutes and breathe through the mouth. Get help if it lasts over 15 minutes, is heavy, follows a head injury, or the person takes blood thinners.

Injury	What to do	Get help if
Head bump	Rest, cold pack wrapped in a cloth, an adult nearby for 24 hours.	112: knocked out, repeated vomiting, drowsy, confused, a fit, clear fluid from nose or ears, headache getting worse
Sprain	Rest, cold pack 15-20 min every 2-3 hours, support bandage, raise the limb.	Can't bear weight, looks misshapen, numb, or no better after a few days
Broken bone	Support it as you found it. Pad around it; a rolled towel or magazine makes a splint.	Always. 112 if the bone is through the skin, or for hip, thigh, neck or back
Something in the eye	Chemical: rinse with clean water for 15+ minutes. Object stuck in: don't remove it, cover both eyes.	Any chemical, embedded object, or change in vision
Swallowed something harmful	Don't make them sick. Keep the packet. Call the Poisons Line 01 809 2166 (8am-10pm daily).	112 if drowsy, fitting, struggling to breathe, or not responding
Cuts and grazes	Rinse under running water, pat dry, cover with a clean dressing.	Gaping, deep, dirty, a bite, or spreading redness, heat, pus or fever

10. A pharmacy first-aid kit for about €30

Pre-made kits are often padded with tiny plasters. You'll get a better kit by buying these at a pharmacy or supermarket. Keep one in the house, a smaller one in the car and grab bags, and check dates every six months.



Item	Roughly	Why
Disposable nitrile gloves (10 pairs)	€3	Protects you and the wound
Sterile dressings, medium and large (4)	€5	The pad for any bleeding wound
Crepe bandages 7.5 cm (2) + triangular bandage	€5	Hold dressings, support sprains, make a sling
Fabric plasters, assorted + blister plasters	€4	Everyday cuts
Medical tape + safety pins	€2	Securing dressings
Saline pods (10)	€4	Rinsing eyes and wounds when water is doubtful
Antiseptic cream (e.g. Savlon, Germolene)	€4	Minor cuts and grazes
Tweezers, small scissors, tick remover	€3	Splinters, ticks, cutting tape
Foil blanket (2)	€2	Warmth for shock
Cling film (from the kitchen)	-	Covering burns

Worth adding as budget allows

- A trauma bandage (Israeli-type) and a genuine CAT tourniquet.
- A digital thermometer and a CPR face shield.
- Paracetamol and ibuprofen (see Volume 6), antihistamine tablets, oral rehydration sachets.
- Water purification tablets: chlorine-based (e.g. Aquatabs, Katadyn Micropur Forte) are preferred over iodine, which isn't suited to regular use, pregnancy or thyroid conditions.

Antibiotic creams (e.g. fusidic acid) are prescription-only in Ireland. For wounds that look infected, see a pharmacist or GP.

Sterilising tweezers and instruments

Boil metal instruments for 10 minutes in a covered pot, or run them through a pressure cooker cycle (about 15 minutes at pressure). Let them cool in the closed pot and use them straight away. This cleans tools; it doesn't make a pressure cooker suitable for canning low-acid foods (see Volume 11).

Emergency numbers & the series

Service	Number	Use it for
Emergency services	**112 or 999**	Ambulance, Garda, fire, coast guard. Works from any phone, any network.
ESB Networks	1800 372 999	Power cuts, fallen or damaged lines (24/7)
Gas Networks Ireland	1800 20 50 50	Smell of gas (24/7). Call from outside the house.
Uisce Éireann (Irish Water)	1800 278 278	Water outages, burst mains, boil-water notices
HSELive	1800 700 700	Health service information
Public Poisons Line	01 809 2166	Advice if someone has swallowed or touched something harmful (8am-10pm daily)
Samaritans	116 123	Anyone struggling to cope (24/7)
Text About It	Text HELLO to 50808	Free text support (24/7)
Childline	1800 66 66 66	Children and young people up to 18 (24/7)
Your county council	_____	Roads, flooding, local emergency centres
Met Éireann	met.ie / Met Éireann app	Weather warnings

Numbers checked November 2026. Write in your county council's number above, and your own local numbers (GP, out-of-hours doctor, pharmacy, vet, neighbours) in Volume 0.

The Ready At Home series

Vol	Title	What it covers
0	Start Here	Household plan & emergency numbers
1	Just Add Water	Home-dehydrated emergency meals
2	Power Cuts & Storms	Getting through long outages
3	Water & Sanitation	Storing, treating, toilets
4	Cooking & Warmth	Without mains power
5	**First Aid**	Step-by-step emergency care
6	Symptoms & Home Care	Red flags, minor illness, medicines
7	Home Systems & Repairs	Shut-offs, leaks, storm damage, floods
8	Fire Safety & Security	Alarms, escape plans, extinguishers
9	Communications	Family plan, radios, signals
10	Grab Bags & Kits	72-hour, car, child & pet kits
11	Pantry & Stockpile	A 30-day food store you rotate
12	Outdoor Skills	Fire, shelter, knots, navigation
13	Kids, Morale & Wellbeing	Keeping people okay
14	Offline Knowledge & Media	Libraries, maps & media without internet
15	Other Emergencies	Radiation, chemicals, heat, illness, cut off

This series gives general preparedness guidance. It is not a substitute for professional medical, electrical, gas or structural advice, or for a certified first-aid course. In an emergency, call 112 or 999 and follow the call-taker's instructions.

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