

## HANDY FIRST AID TIPS

When someone is injured or suddenly becomes ill, there is usually a critical period before you can get medical treatment and it is this period that is of the utmost importance to the victim. What you do, or what you don't do, in that interval can mean the difference between life and death. You owe it to yourself, your family and your neighbors to know and to understand procedures that you can apply quickly and intelligently in an emergency.

Every household should have some type of first aid kit, and if you do not already have one, assemble your supplies now. Tailor the contents to fit your family's particular needs. Don't add first aid supplies to the jumble of toothpaste and cosmetics in the medicine cabinet. Instead, assemble them in a suitable, labeled box (such as a fishing tackle box or small tool chest with hinged cover), so that everything will be handy when needed. Label everything in the kit clearly, and indicate what it is used for.

Be sure not to lock the box - otherwise you may be hunting for the key when that emergency occurs. Place the box on a shelf beyond the reach of small children, and check it periodically and always restock items as soon as they are used up.

Keep all medications, including non-prescription drugs such as aspirin, out of reach of children. When discarding drugs, be sure to dispose of them where they cannot be retrieved by children or pets.

When an emergency occurs, make sure the injured victim's airway is not blocked by the tongue and that the mouth is free of any secretions and foreign objects. It is extremely important that the person is breathing freely. And if not, you need to administer artificial respiration promptly.

See that the victim has a pulse and good blood circulation as you check for signs of bleeding. Act fast if the victim is bleeding severely or if he has swallowed poison or if his heart or breathing has stopped. Remember every second counts.

Although most injured persons can be safely moved, it is vitally important not to move a person with serious neck or back injuries unless you have to save him from further danger. Keep the patient lying down and quiet. If he has vomited and there is no danger that his neck is broken, turn in on his side to prevent choking and keep him warm by covering him with blankets or coats.

Have someone call for medical assistance while you apply first aid. The person who summons help should explain the nature of the emergency and ask what should be done pending the arrival of the ambulance. Reassure the victim, and try to remain calm yourself. Your calmness can allay the fear and panic of the patient.

Don't give fluids to an unconscious or semiconscious person; fluids may enter his windpipe and cause suffocation. Don't try to arouse an unconscious person by slapping or shaking.

Look for an emergency medical identification card or an emblematic device that the victim may be wearing to alert you to any health problems, allergies or diseases that

may require special care.