

FIRST AID

SHOCK

1. SHOCK

1.01 Shock is a condition in which all of the activities of the body are greatly depressed. Some degree of shock accompanies all accidents. It may be immediate or delayed and frequently results in death.

1.02 Shock results from loss of blood, from pain, cold and exposure. It is especially severe in case of hemorrhage, burns, crushing injuries and asphyxia. A milder form of shock may come from the sight of wounds, fear, bad news or similar mental causes. There is apparently a loss of tone in the blood vessels and a concentration of blood in the abdominal vessels, with a lowering of blood pressure.

1.03 SYMPTOMS -

- (a) The face is pale with an anxious expression. The lips, finger nails and ears have a bluish tinge. The weary, lusterless eyes, half covered by drooping eyelids, have a glassy and vacant expression.
- (b) Cold perspiration appears, particularly on the forehead and the palms of the hands.
- (c) The pulse is rapid and weak. It is not unusual for the pulse to get so weak that it cannot be felt.
- (d) A severe chill often develops. The body feels cold, shakes violently, and the teeth chatter.

- (e) Usually the victim lies quietly and takes little interest in what goes on around him, although sometimes he may be restless. Restlessness is particularly likely to be present if there is internal bleeding. If he is asked how he feels, the question often has to be repeated two or three times before there is any reply. Then he usually complains of being cold, or very tired, or that his limbs feel dead. In extreme cases there may be complete unconsciousness.
- (f) Nausea and vomiting are frequent.
- (g) Breathing is irregular. Long, deep, sighing breaths alternate with very shallow ones.

As explained before, these symptoms result from the fact that all parts of the body are receiving an insufficient supply of blood.

1.04 CARE -

- (1) Position - Lay the victim on his back with the head low, with feet and legs elevated.
- (2) Heat - Keeping the body of the victim warm is the most important thing both in treating and preventing shock. Blankets, coats, robes, or any similar material may be used. Apply external heat if available, however, only when cold temperature prevails.
- (3) Fluids - If given, fluids should be administered in small amounts and frequently. Hot tea, coffee, milk or broth may be tried, if water is not tolerated.