

# ADVANTAGE

## Emergencies

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What to do in an emergency

### Step 1: Triple H



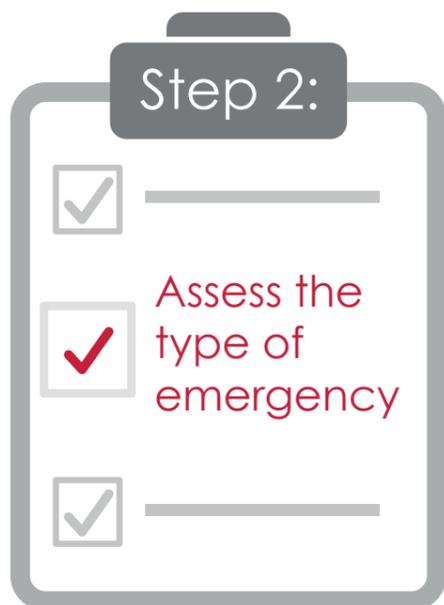
**Hazards:** Look out for hazardous objects



**Hello:** Check if the person is responsive



**Help:** Call for help



### Step 3: First Aid

## Check for a pulse



## Questions

for Dr Thapelo Motshudi

#### 1 What to do in an emergency

Emergencies are generally, by their nature, unexpected and often scary, and can cause a lot of anxiety. It is helpful to know what steps to follow when you find yourself in an emergency situation. The most important thing to remember in an emergency is that your role is to get the person to a place of safety, where they can receive proper help as soon as possible, without endangering your own life.

#### 2 Step 1: Triple "Hs"

- **Hazards** – look out for hazards that could place your own life at risk. If assisting someone by the side of the road, first be sure there aren't oncoming cars that could injure you or place your life in danger. If someone has been electrocuted, make sure that the power is completely off before touching the victim. Your safety is of utmost importance; otherwise you are of no use to anyone if you also end up injured.
- **Hello** – if you suspect that someone is unconscious first check that the affected person is arousable or really unresponsive. Tap them firmly enough to greet them or awaken them - check to make sure if they need help and are not just taking a nap.
- **Help** – call for help. Either instruct someone specific around you to call an ambulance or other relevant source of help, or do it yourself if there is no one else. Cellphones are particularly useful in this regard because emergency numbers are free, and almost everyone walks around with a cellphone.

#### 3 Step 2: Assess the type of emergency

There are various types of emergencies such as a seizure or fit; a heart attack; drowning; an accident resulting in fractures and bleeding; choking; etc. In all emergencies the basic principles remain the same.

In the case of a seizure or fit – make sure the person is on a safe flat surface with no edges or sharp objects around them. Do not try to restrain them. If possible keep track of the time to establish the length of the seizure. Once the seizure stops, the person may be in a deep sleep; put them on their side, which is called the recovery position. This is to ensure they do not suck fluids into the mouth or vomit.

#### 4 Step 3: First Aid

- Feel the side of the neck for a pulse, and not for longer than 10s. If there is a pulse and the person is breathing then continue observing while waiting for help.
- If there is a pulse but no breathing then give rescue mouth-to-mouth breaths if it is safe to do so. It is important to avoid coming into contact with bodily fluids, therefore use any appropriate device to cover the victim's mouth while you provide rescue breaths.
- If there is no pulse and no normal breathing then perform 100-120 chest compressions per minute, or 30 compressions for every 2 breaths you give. Ensure that you compress to a depth of about 5cm, and check that the chest recoils fully after each compression. Continue this until the person wakes up; or help arrives; or you get tired. If you are in an environment where there is an AED (automatic external defibrillator) then connect it as directed and begin administering shocks.

The above-mentioned steps are a guideline of what to do in an emergency. It is highly recommended that each person attends a Basic Life Support at the nearest available facility where there will be an opportunity to practice these lifesaving measures. When a person has a cardiac arrest, survival depends on immediately receiving CPR from someone nearby.

According to the American Heart Association, about 90 percent of people who suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrests die. CPR, especially if performed immediately, can double or triple a cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival. It is often said that bad CPR is better than no CPR.