



British Heart  
Foundation

**HEARTSTART**

# **LIFE SAVING GUIDE**

Training a nation  
of life savers

**FIGHT  
FOR EVERY  
HEARTBEAT**

[bhf.org.uk](http://bhf.org.uk)

# HEARTSTART

## TAUGHT MY SON



how to recognise a

# HEART ATTACK

Without that, I might not be here.

The British Heart Foundation has a vision to create a nation of life savers. As part of that vision, we're doing everything we can to make sure the British public know CPR and can use public access defibrillators.

Alex, Survivor

# Heartstart

This booklet shows you what to do in an emergency.  
You'll learn how to recognise symptoms and know  
how to save a life if someone:



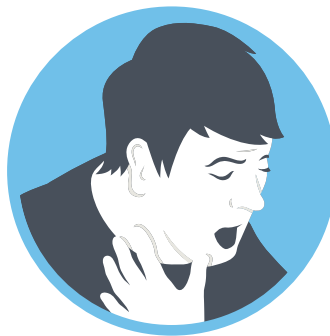
## **is unconscious**

When someone is unconscious you won't be able to wake them up and they won't respond if you touch them.



## **has chest pains**

When someone has pains in their chest they will usually be awake but feeling unwell.



## **is choking**

When someone is choking they won't be able to speak and will be struggling to breathe.



## **is losing a lot of blood**

If someone has been badly cut, they could lose too much blood which can be dangerous.

# Making the call

02-03

Never put yourself in danger and always shout for help or call 999 or 112 straight away.



**'Which service do you require?'**

**Tell them you need an ambulance.**

If you tell them what's happening and where you are, they'll tell you what to do next.

You can call from a landline or mobile. Quite often a mobile can make emergency calls even if your network doesn't have coverage in that area. And you don't need credit to call from a mobile phone. Calling 999 or 112 is always free. Use the speaker button on your phone so you have your hands free while you talk.



It doesn't matter if the phone is locked. If you touch 'Emergency' it will let you dial 999 or 112.

# Emergency!

## Think:



### **Danger**

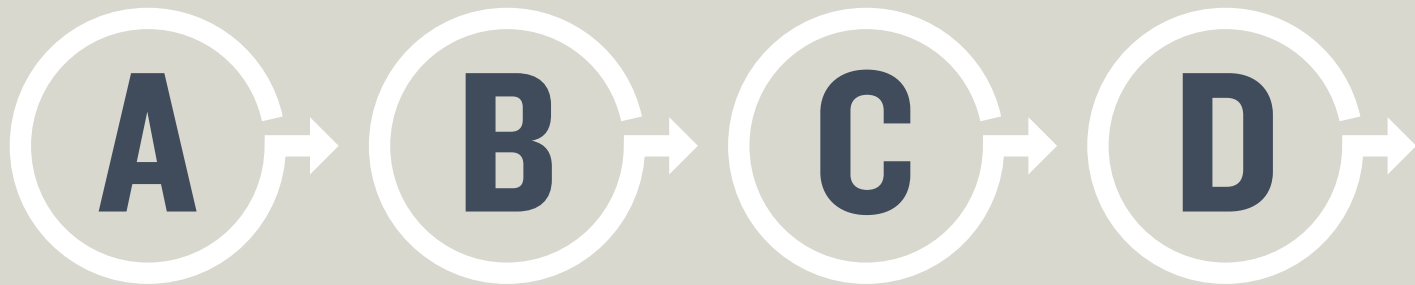
Check for danger. Always put your own safety first and check for risks before you start helping the casualty.

### **Response**

Can the person respond or are they unconscious? Ask them simple questions like 'Are you all right?' or 'Can you tell me your name?'

### **Shout**

Call out for help — it helps if you can get someone else to call 999 or 112 while you deal with the emergency.



### **Airway**

Make sure their airway is open and unblocked. Tilt their head back and lift their chin to open the airway.

### **Breathing**

Check if the person is breathing normally. If they are, put them in the recovery position by lying them on their side with their knees bent, their hand tucked under their cheek and their head tilted to keep the airway clear.

### **CPR**

If they are not breathing, start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). This means you help the person's heart and lungs pump blood around their body by repeatedly pressing their chest 30 times and then give two rescue breaths to get oxygen into their lungs. Do this again and again until an ambulance arrives. Always ask a bystander to call 999 or 112.

### **Defibrillation**

Ask someone to find out where the nearest defibrillator is and get them to bring it to you as quickly as they can.

# They won't wake up!

06—07

If someone won't wake up you need to check if they are breathing normally.

**Never put yourself in danger — make sure it's safe to go up to the person. Always shout for help and call 999 or 112 first.**



**1** Open the person's airway by putting one hand on their forehead and gently tilting their head back. At the same time, lift their chin upwards by putting two fingers of your other hand under their chin. This makes sure their tongue isn't blocking their airway.





Unconscious

**2**

Check if the person is breathing normally. Put your face close to their mouth. Can you hear or feel their breath? Is their chest moving?

**3**

If they're breathing normally, put them in the recovery position.

**4**

If they are gasping, breathing occasionally or not breathing at all, you need to start CPR.

# The recovery position

08—09

If a person is unconscious and breathing normally, you need to put them in the recovery position.

**Never put yourself in danger — make sure it's safe to go up to the person. Always shout for help and call 999 or 112 first.**

**1** Make sure they are lying down somewhere safe. You're going to roll them on their side.



**2**

Take the person's arm that is nearest to you and place it at a right angle to the body, with the palm facing upwards.

**3**

Bring their other arm across their chest. Hold the back of their hand against their cheek that is nearest you.



**Unconscious**

# The recovery position

10-11





**6**

Tilt their head back again by putting one hand on their forehead and gently lifting their head back whilst putting two fingers of your other hand under their chin to lift their chin upwards. This makes sure their tongue isn't blocking their airway.

**7**

Call 999 or 112 and keep checking the person is breathing normally while you wait for an ambulance. If they stop breathing normally start CPR.

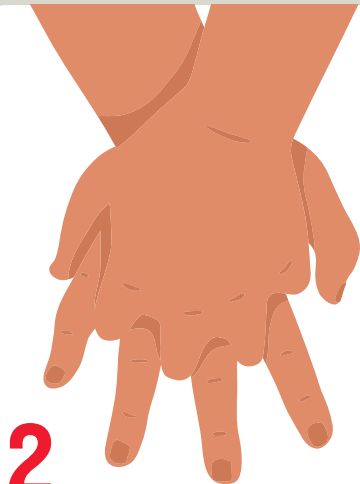
# They're not breathing!

12—13

If a person won't wake up and isn't breathing, or is breathing in gasps, they could be having a cardiac arrest. Cardiac arrest is when someone's heart stops pumping blood around their body. You need to start CPR straight away. CPR is a way of pumping the person's heart and breathing for them until an ambulance comes.

If you know how to do CPR or think you could give it a go, doing something is always better than doing nothing. If there is an adult around, you can tell them how to do CPR and call an ambulance for them.

**1** Call 999 or 112 and start CPR straight away. Never put yourself in danger — look around and make sure it's safe to go up to the person.



**2**

Kneel next to the person and put the base of your hand in the centre of their chest. Put your other hand on top of the first one. Lock your fingers in between each other.

**3**

Straighten your arms so your shoulders are above the person's chest. Hold your fingers straight so they don't touch the person. Push down hard 30 times. Try and do about two hard presses per second.

Don't worry about hurting them — bruises and even broken bones can mend later. Just focus on keeping the CPR going until help arrives.

**Unconscious**

# They're not breathing!

14—15





# 6

Keep doing CPR. Do 30 pushes, 2 rescue breaths, again and again until the ambulance arrives or the person coughs and breathes normally. If you start to get tired, get someone else to take over.

## Hands only CPR.

If you don't want to give rescue breaths, just use your hands. Keep doing chest compressions until an ambulance arrives. It really improves a person's chance of survival. Always do something.



If there is someone to help, ask them to go and find out if there is a defibrillator nearby.

A defibrillator (sometimes called an AED) is a machine that can help someone who is having a cardiac arrest. It gives them a controlled shock to help get their heart working again. They are kept in places like schools, supermarkets, shops and train stations across the UK.

Unconscious

# Chest pain

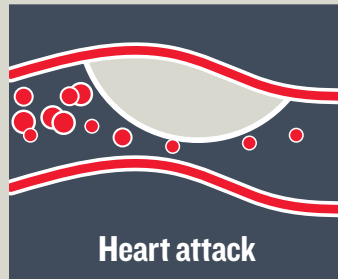
16—17

If someone feels a dull ache, tightness, a sense of heaviness or burning in their chest they might be having a heart attack. The person may look pale and sweaty and also have pain in the arms, neck, jaw, back or stomach. They could also feel sick or dizzy. They need to get to hospital as quickly as possible.

Never put yourself in danger — make sure it's safe to go up to the person. Always shout for help and call 999 or 112 first.

## Heart attack and cardiac arrest: what's the difference?

A cardiac arrest and a heart attack are not the same thing. A heart attack is when part of the person's heart muscle is not getting enough blood. They need to go to hospital. A cardiac arrest is when a person's heart has suddenly stopped working. They will be unconscious and need CPR straight away.





**1**

Get the person to sit down so they are comfortable and safe.

**2**

Don't give the person anything to eat or drink.

**3**

If you can, ask an adult to give the person a 300mg adult aspirin and get them to chew it.

**4**

Stay with them until an ambulance arrives. If they fall asleep and won't wake up, check they are breathing. If they are, put them in the recovery position. If they are not, do CPR.

# They're choking!

18—19

If someone can't breathe, is going blue or grabbing at their neck they could be choking on something stuck in their throat. You need to help the person to get whatever is stuck out.

**Never put yourself in danger — make sure it's safe to go up to the person. Always shout for help and call 999 or 112 first.**

**1** Ask the person to try and cough.

**2**

If they can't answer and can't cough, use the heel of your hand to slap the top part of their back hard, 5 times. Always check after each back slap to see if whatever is blocking their throat has come out of their mouth.

**3**

If they are still choking you need to do stomach thrusts. Here's how:

Stand behind the person and put your arms around their stomach, just above their belly button.

- Make a fist with one hand and grab it with the other.
- Push your fist hard into their stomach and pull it upwards — that's a stomach thrust.
- Do the thrusts five times, but after each one, see if the person can breathe again.



**5**

If the person becomes unconscious and is not breathing, you need to call 999 or 112, and do CPR while you wait for an ambulance.

**6**

If whatever is stuck comes out and the person stops choking, they still need to go to hospital to check that they are okay.

**4**

Do 5 back slaps and 5 stomach thrusts until whatever is blocking their throat has come out.

**Never do stomach thrusts on a baby or child under 1. Only do backslaps.**

**Don't do backslaps or stomach thrusts on someone unless they are actually choking. It can be dangerous to do this to someone if they don't need it.**



# That's a lot of blood...

20—21

If a person loses a lot of blood it can be very dangerous, so it's important to try and stop the flow of blood and get help as quickly as you can.

**Never put yourself in danger — make sure it's safe to go up to the person. Always shout for help and call 999 or 112 first.**

**1**  
Tell the person to sit down, or if they are dizzy get them to lie down.

**2**

Try and see where the blood is coming from. If the cut has something in it — like a piece of glass or blade — don't pull it out. Just squeeze the sides of the cut together. Make sure you don't get hurt too!



**3**

If there is nothing sticking out, press down on the cut with a clean towel or something similar. Ask the person to hold it down if they can.

**4**

Keep the person warm with your coat or a blanket. It is very important that they don't get cold. Keep them talking until an ambulance arrives. If they are lying down, raise their legs on something like a chair, but only if their leg isn't injured.



**British Heart  
Foundation**

For over 50 years our research has saved lives.

We've broken new ground, revolutionised  
treatments and transformed care.

But heart and circulatory disease still kills  
one in four people in the UK.

That's why we need you.

With your support, your time, your donations,  
our research will beat heart disease for good.

**Text FIGHT to 70080 to donate £3\***

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FOR EVERY  
HEARTBEAT**

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