



Halifax Chiropractic Clinic



[About](#) | [Doctors](#) | [Clinic](#) | [Exercises](#) | [Seasonal Tips](#) | [Articles](#) | [Links](#) | [Media](#) | [Home](#)

FIRST AID: What Would You Do?

by Dr. Brian S. Seaman, DC, FCCSS(C), FICC

- A child has fallen down stairs.
- Your neighbour is experiencing chest pain and shortness of breath.
- Your spouse has sprained an ankle.

What can you do?

First aid is important for everyone – babysitters, office workers, parents, grandparents, and coaches, just to name a few. Some incidents only require basic first aid measures. Others are true medical emergencies for which it would be best to have some training.

There are a variety of courses available through the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance. Some are one day programs which focus on basic first aid and CPR (**C** ardio- **P** ulmonary **R** esuscitation) whereas others last several days (ie. Medical First Responder) and cover a variety of advanced topics such as spinal injuries and using an automated defibrillator.

Which should I do?

Remember the Boy Scout motto – “Be Prepared”. It is always best to be prepared but always “expect the unexpected”.

Proper training will provide you with the necessary knowledge and skills to deal with many first aid or emergency situations.

If you have never done such a course, or it has been a few years, then start with a basic first aid and CPR course. This will provide you with the ‘ground work’ for some of the more advanced courses.

Where should I go?

As mentioned, the Red Cross and St. John Ambulance have a variety of courses available. You can check the course descriptions of the skills you will learn in their brochures or online (websites later in this article). Some are easy; some are more difficult. Some of the skills are more physically challenging such as doing CPR for an extended period of time, using a spine board, or learning how to remove an accident victim from a car crash using a KED (**K**endrick **E**xtraction **D**evice; this is a special device – kind of like a body brace – which slips behind the patient, and when strapped on, totally supports the neck and back allowing an individual to be removed from the seat of their car in the event that a spinal injury is suspected).

Stopping the bleeding from a cut, by applying direct pressure is fairly straight forward. Learning how to assess an unconscious person who has a suspected spinal injury is more advanced.

Learning new things can be intimidating; but remember – everyone in the class wants to learn too. Even if you are a grandparent, someone's life may depend on you someday.

The instructors for these courses know that everybody comes from varied backgrounds. They will always encourage your interest, and be positive with their feedback and comments. They are also very well trained and often can be seen at a variety of events.

Once you have some basic skills ‘under your belt’ the instructors can teach you more and more.

Isn't that what 911 is for?

Yes – **BUT** – sometimes a few minutes are critical especially with something like a heart attack or stroke. Being prepared and knowing how to do CPR can provide the body with much needed blood flow and oxygen.

Or if a cut is deep, and involves an artery, it will be important to stop the bleeding and control the possibility of the individual going into shock.

Or if someone has fallen down stairs and is conscious, be able to let the 911 staff know what happened and comfort the person who fell.

Above all, stay calm . Getting upset does not help the person who was hurt or injured.

The 911 staff are well trained and will assist you as much as possible until the paramedics arrive.

Did you know?

- The average adult breathes approximately 500 ml of air each breath. That is about one (1) pint.
- Your eyes transmit images to the brain at speeds up to 300 feet per second.
- The amount of blood received by your brain is consistent regardless of the activity you are doing.
- A human heart on average weighs about 300-400 grams (less than a pound).
- You use 17 of the 30 facial muscles when you smile.
- Over a month, your blood will travel through the body 43,000 times.
- Blood vessels form a network which on average is 60,000 miles in length.

(Source: First Responder, Second Edition, Canadian Red Cross Society, 2002).

For more information

First aid and CPR courses are available through several organizations including:

- Canadian Red Cross – www.redcross.ca
- St. John Ambulance – www.sja.ca
- Courtney's First Aid and Safety Training – www.cfatraining.ca

Remember...

Be prepared and expect the unexpected.

Reprinted with permission of
The Seniors' Advocate. P.O. Box 5005, Waverly, Nova Scotia, B2R 1S2

Halifax Chiropractic Clinic
6112 Willow Street
Halifax, NS B3K 1M2
Ph: 1 902 423-9223
Fax: 1 902 423-9666