BASIC FIRST AID

Call 999 or 112 first in any serious emergency. The call handler will talk you through it.

⚠ FIRST, CHECK: DR ABC

D
Danger
Is it safe to help?

R
Response
Are they awake?

A
Airway
Tilt head back, lift chin.

B
Breathing
Look, listen, feel for up to 10 seconds.

C
Circulation
Look for severe bleeding.

Not breathing normally: CPR

1. Call 999 or 112. Put the phone on speaker.
2. Push hard and fast in the centre of the chest: 5–6cm deep, 100–120 times a minute.
3. After 30 pushes, give 2 rescue breaths, or just keep pushing if you can't.
4. Send someone for a defibrillator. Don't leave the person yourself.
5. Keep going until help arrives or they start breathing normally.

Unresponsive but breathing

1. Recovery position: nearest arm out at a right angle, other hand against their cheek.
2. Bend the far knee up and roll them towards you onto their side.
3. Tilt the head back to keep the airway open.
4. Call 999 or 112. Keep checking their breathing.

Severe bleeding

1. Wear gloves if you have them.
2. Press firmly on the wound with a clean pad or cloth.
3. Call 999 or 112.
4. Don't pull out anything stuck in the wound. Press around it.
5. Bandage firmly. Lie them down, raise their legs and keep them warm.

⚠ Choking adult

1. Ask them to cough.
2. Up to 5 sharp blows between the shoulder blades.
3. Then up to 5 abdominal thrusts: fist between belly button and chest, pull in and up.
4. Still blocked? Call 999 or 112 and keep repeating.
5. If they become unresponsive, start CPR.

Burns and scalds

1. Cool under cool running water for at least 20 minutes.
2. Take off jewellery and clothing near the burn, unless stuck.
3. Cover loosely with cling film, laid on lengthways.
4. No ice, creams or gels. Don't pop blisters. Get medical advice.

Nothing beats training. This sheet is a reminder, not a course. St John Ambulance and the British Red Cross run first aid courses, and both have free first aid apps. Keep a first aid kit at home and in your grab bag (P8).

Important. General guidance, not professional advice. In an emergency, call 999 and follow the emergency services and local authorities. Based on St John Ambulance and Resuscitation Council UK advice, checked Oct 2026. Not a substitute for training.