



Wheeling Wheelmen

First Aid for Cyclists

Studies have shown that cyclists are the first to assist other cyclists in the event of an accident. If you are out on your bike regularly, it really is a good idea to have basic first aid knowledge. It is also a good idea to carry a first aid kit containing the following:

- Band-aids
- CPR mask
- Elastic bandage (ace wrap)
- Alcohol free -cleansing wipes
- 4x4 gauze pads
- Ice pack
- Tape
- Small cloth or towel
- Triangular bandage/sling
- Water

Bruising/Sprains/Strains

- Help the injured person to sit or lie down comfortably, with some padding underneath their injury to support it in a raised position if possible.
- Using an ice pack wrapped in a cloth, apply to affected area -this will help reduce swelling and pain. This can be held in place with an elastic bandage/ace wrap.
- If the pain is severe or they are unable to move the injured part, arrange to get them to hospital or **Call 911**.

Cuts and Scrapes

- If the cut is small
 - Clean it by either rinsing with water (bottled water works) or using alcohol free wipes, wiping AWAY from the wound and using a clean swab with each swipe.
 - Pat dry with sterile gauze.
 - Cover it with sterile gauze and secure with tape or band aid. May add antibiotic ointment if available.
 - Seek medical advice if you are worried or if you think that there might be a risk of infection. If you haven't had a tetanus shot in over 10 years, you may want to get one.
- If the wound is large or bleeding heavily
 - **Call 911**.
 - Apply firm and direct pressure to the wound to stem the bleeding and if possible, raise the injured area above heart level. When bleeding is very heavy, use any cloth you have (t-shirt, towel etc.) to apply as much pressure as able.

- Do **NOT** let go to "check on" the bleeding. If it is bleeding profusely, maintain pressure while waiting for help.

Penetrating objects

- If a solid object like handlebars or a tree branch got stuck in the person's body, do not pull it out of the wound under any circumstances, as it could trigger arterial or severe bleeding. **Call 911** for this situation.

Dislocation

- If the injured person has a dislocated shoulder
 - **Call 911**
 - Try to keep them still, while supporting their arm in a comfortable position.
 - You can immobilize the injured arm with a sling if they will let you and you have one. For extra support, secure the arm to the chest by wrapping an elastic bandage (ace wrap) right around the chest and the sling.

Fractures

- If there is an obvious fracture, **Call 911**.
 - If the person allows you, you can help support the limb while getting them into a comfortable position. Encourage the person to be as still as possible.
 - For arm injuries, you can secure the injured arm with a sling if you have one.
 - If any bones are protruding or visible, quickly rinse with water and cover lightly with gauze as able.
 - Provide emotional support for the person while you wait for the ambulance.

Head Injury

- Head injuries can be potentially serious and should be treated with care. This is especially true if the injured person is taking a blood thinner.
- If someone has experienced a head injury, and they are fully conscious, help them to sit down in a comfortable position. If they are lying down, do not move them.
- Give them an ice pack to hold against the injured part of their head (or secure with ace wrap) and monitor their condition. Treat any bleeding with direct and firm pressure.
- If the injured person becomes drowsy, confused, complains of a worsening headache/double vision, or is vomiting **Call 911**.
- Anyone who has lost consciousness, even for a short period of time should be taken to the Emergency Department, preferably via ambulance.

Neck Injury

- **Any head injury is a potential neck injury**

- If a rider falls and complains of neck pain, numbness or weakness in an arm or leg, get them to lie down if they are not already and **Call 911**.
- Keep them at rest, and if their helmet is making things worse, **GENTLY** and **CAREFULLY** remove it, keeping the neck in a neutral position.

Dehydration

Signs and symptoms of dehydration include: fatigue, pale in color, lightheadedness, rapid heartbeat.

- If someone you know becomes dehydrated, help them to sit down comfortably.
- Give them plenty of water to drink. You can also give them oral rehydration solutions if you have them.
- Advise the person to rest, and, if they are suffering from cramp, stretch and massage the affected muscles.
- If they remain unwell, **Call 911**.

Risk of internal bleeding

- At first glance, injuries to internal organs may not be apparent. It is important to stay alert to complaints of pain in the abdominal area. The patient's stomach may feel hard and they may not let someone else touch it. If the injured biker fell on his/her abdomen, back or side, there is a high risk of liver or spleen injury.
- Pain shooting up their shoulders maybe a sign of internal bleeding. Never underestimate a hard crash, and even if the patient feels healthy, it is necessary to observe them.
- In case of nausea, deterioration, malaise or when you suspect that everything is not in perfect order, **Call 911** immediately. No one has X-ray eyes, so it is better to call for help than to regret not acting.

Prevention

Keep yourself and your ride HAPPY by following these prevention tips

- Helmet - to protect your head.
- Awareness-maintain awareness of surroundings & other bikers.
- Properly maintained bicycle - a safe bike provides a safe ride.
- Phone - being able to call for help can make a huge difference.
- Your water - stay hydrated while exercising, especially in hot/humid weather. It is a must.

Prepare

Prepare yourself with a basic first aid class and CPR training. Both are offered by the Red Cross and other local entities.