




Emergency Medical Responder

# COMMON MEDICAL COMPLAINTS




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## CHAPTER 14 - OTHER COMMON MEDICAL COMPLAINTS

What is a Medical Complaint?

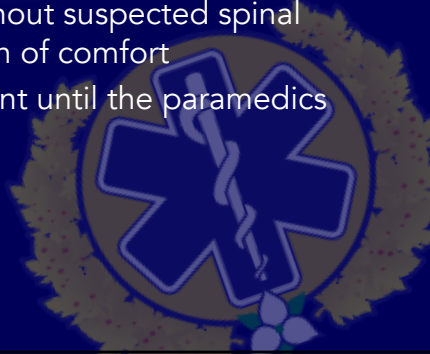
Any chief complaint not caused by trauma





If you cannot determine a specific complaint or obtain a medical history:

- 1) Monitor the airway and breathing
- 2) If patient is conscious and without suspected spinal injuries, place him in a position of comfort
- 3) Perform an ongoing assessment until the paramedics arrive



### Specific Medical Complaints

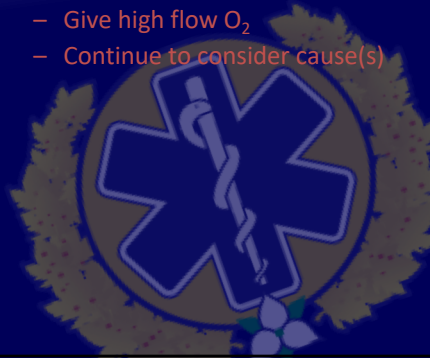
- Altered mental status
- Hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia
- Poisoning
- Stroke
- Seizures
- Abdominal pain and distress





## Altered Mental Status

- **Some causes**
  - Hypoxia
  - Hypoglycemia
  - Stroke
  - Seizures
  - Fever
  - Infections
  - Poisoning
  - Head injury
  - Psychiatric conditions
- **Treatment**
  - Assess and monitor breathing closely
  - Position the patient
  - Give high flow O<sub>2</sub>
  - Continue to consider cause(s)



## Abdominal Pain

Any severe abdominal pain should be considered. Signs and symptoms include

- Abdominal pain, local or diffuse
- Colicky pain
- Abdominal tenderness, local or diffuse
- Anxiety
- Loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting
- Fever
- Rigid, tense, or distended abdomen
- Signs of shock
- Vomiting blood, bright red or like coffee grounds
- Blood in the stool, bright red or tarry black





## Emergency Care for Acute Abdominal Distress

- 1) Prevent possible life-threatening complications
- 2) Make patient comfortable
- 3) Arrange transport ASAP
- 4) Maintain open airway
- 5) Administer oxygen, if allowed
- 6) Be alert for shock




## Asthma

- Defined as a disease that causes narrowing of the airways constricting breathing
- Symptoms include:
  - Wheezing
  - Shortness of breath
  - Tightness in the chest
    - Can range in severity
- Asthma can be life-threatening!




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## Intervention for asthma

- Ensure the ACAB's
  - Reassure the casualty
  - Position the casualty in an upright position leaning slightly forward
    - Tripod position
  - Monitor vitals
  - Assist with medication (ie. Ventolin)



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## Anaphylactic Shock

- Defined as a major allergic reaction within the body
- Causes
  - Specific drugs
  - Insects
  - Foods
  - Environment, etc.



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## Signs and Symptoms

- Anxiety
- Blotchy skin
- Swelling of the face
- Swelling of the neck
- Swelling of the throat and tongue
- Puffiness around the eyes
- Breathing difficulties
- Rapid pulse



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## First aid for anaphylaxis

- **EMS!**
- Treat as breathing emergency
- EPI-PEN, or ALLERJECT
- In the event the first dose is not effective after 5 minutes, and a second dose is available, you can administer a second dose!




D 2



## Diabetes

- Defined as a condition in which the body fails to regulate the concentration of sugar in the blood.
- Diabetics are prone to two main emergencies:
  - **Hyperglycemia** - high blood sugar
  - **Hypoglycemia** - low blood sugar

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## Hypoglycemia

Hypoglycemia - Low blood glucose

Colour	pale
Skin	profuse sweating and cold
Responsiveness	irritable, confused or may be unresponsive, fits may be present in later stages
Pulse	rapid and weak
Breathing	normal to rapid
Onset	sudden, may be minutes
Treatment	sugar

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# Hyperglycemia

Hyperglycemia - high blood glucose

Colour	flushed
Skin	dry
Responsiveness	restless, drowsy or lethargic behavior
Pulse	rapid and full
Breathing	deep and sighing, possible sweet smell - acetone
Onset	gradual, hours to days
Treatment	insulin

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# Management for the responsive diabetic

- Establish ACABs
- Activate EMS
- Position of comfort
- Give something sugary
  - Glucose tablets are the preferred product
  - If not available use: Mentos, Skittles, Jelly Beans, Orange Juice, or Whole Milk

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## First aid for the unresponsive diabetic

- ESM
- Activate EMS
- ACAB's
- Recovery Position
- Monitor
- Prevent Chilling
- Look for other causes

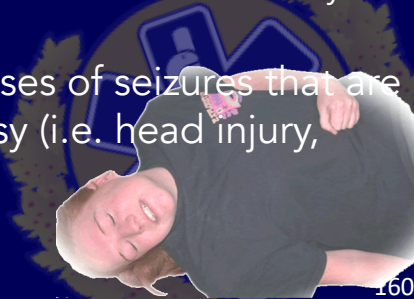


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## Seizures

- Seizures:
  - A condition where the patient may experience fits with periods of unresponsiveness
- Epilepsy
  - Defined as a condition that causes brief disruptions in the normal electrical activity of the brain
- There are many causes of seizures that are unrelated to epilepsy (i.e. head injury, stroke)

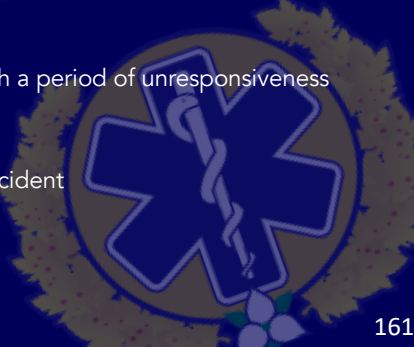


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## Types of Seizures

- **Focal**
  - A minor form of epilepsy
  - Resembles daydreaming
  - Often seen in children
  - Non life-threatening
- **General**
  - Tonic-Clonic Seizures
  - Major form of epilepsy
  - Casualty experiences fits with a period of unresponsiveness
- **Status epilepticus**
  - A rare but life threatening incident
  - Back to back seizures

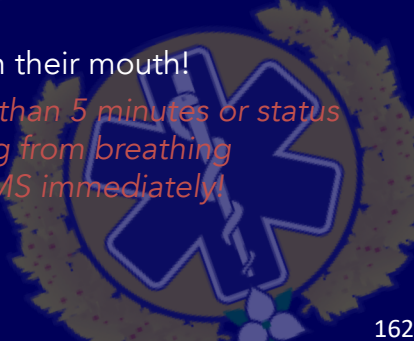


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## Interventions for seizures

- Remain calm!
- Make the area safe for the casualty
- Look for signs of epilepsy
- It is normal for the casualty to have frothing at the mouth with some blood (don't be alarmed its likely they bit their tongue)
- DO NOT put anything in their mouth!
- *If the seizure lasts more than 5 minutes or status epilepticus or is suffering from breathing emergencies activate EMS immediately!*



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## Febrile convulsions

- Occurs when the casualty overheats
- Common in infant and child years
- First Aid includes:
  - Cool down the child
    - Remove clothing
    - Ensure a good cool air supply
    - Sponge with tepid water
      - Start at the head
  - Prevent injury



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