Avoid These Common First Aid Mistakes

Doctors, nurses and safety experts constantly preach to us about how we should all learn first aid. But is it really that important? The answer is a resounding yes. When a person is injured, the proper first aid techniques can greatly lessen the severity of their situation. In particularly grave situations, first aid can even save a life.

Even a seemingly minor injury, such as a small cut on your hand or a bump on your head, can lead to serious medical problems if you don’t take the appropriate first aid measures. If things get bad enough, you may have to miss work—which means you’ll lose valuable time and money.

To help protect yourself and those around you, it’s critical to know first aid. Sign up for a first aid course with a qualified instructor and you’ll learn how to respond quickly and properly to almost any type of injury.

People who have not taken a first aid course often make mistakes when attempting to help an injured person. Sometimes, these mistakes can be deadly. Here are a few of the most common first aid mistakes:

1. **Treating burns with butter or ice:** If you burn your skin, do not treat the area with butter or ice. Butter can prevent your skin from healing properly and ice can cause frostbite, damaging the skin even more. Also, never cover a burn with a bandage or any other covering.

   If you are suffering from a mild burn, wash the affected area with cool water and apply antibiotic ointment. If the burn is severe or located in a sensitive area, such as around your eyes or mouth, see a doctor immediately.

2. **Telling someone with a nose bleed to lean back:** If someone is suffering from a nose bleed, the last thing they should is lean their head back. They could actually choke on blood.

   If you have a nosebleed, sit down, lean forward and pinch your nose just below the nasal bone for five to ten minutes. Once the bleeding stops, do not blow your nose or bend over for several hours—this could cause the bleeding to start up again. If you have a nose bleed that lasts longer than 20 minutes, seek medical attention.

3. **Trying to move a badly injured person:** If someone is badly injured, do not try to move them. Even if an injured pedestrian is lying in the middle of a busy street after being hit by a car, DO NOT try to move him. If you attempt to move him, you could make his injuries even worse.

   Instead, call 911 immediately and wait with the victim until the ambulance arrives. Only a trained professional, such as an EMT, should move a severely injured person.

4. **Not acting quickly enough:** One of the biggest first aid mistakes people make is simply not acting quickly enough. Let’s say your co-worker John cuts himself badly, and is losing a lot of blood very quickly. If you don’t act right away by applying pressure to the wound to stop the bleeding, John could die within a matter of minutes.

   You should also react quickly to smaller injuries. For example, imagine that you scrape your finger on a rusty old nail sticking out of your workstation. If you simply wipe off the blood and go back to work, the cut could get badly infected and even lead to blood poisoning.

   This is why it’s so important to act quickly. Instead of ignoring your scrape and assuming it will be fine, you should thoroughly clean the area with soap and water, apply antibiotic ointment, wrap your finger in sterile dressing and see a nurse immediately.
With the proper first aid training, you will know better than to make these mistakes. Oftentimes, first aid can mean the difference between life or death. Play it safe and sign up for a first aid course today.