Glossary of First Aid Terms
A

**Artery:** A blood vessel that carries oxygenated blood from the heart around the body.

**Amputation:** Cutting off a finger, toe or limb.

**Anaphylaxis:** A life threatening emergency because of an acute allergic reaction.

**Asthma:** A condition where the airways become tight and produce mucus making it very difficult to breathe.

**Angina:** Pain or tightness in the heart caused by a reduced blood supply to the coronary arteries.

**Atrium:** Upper chamber of the heart.

**Acute:** A condition which happens suddenly.

**Airway:** The tubes from the nose and mouth to the lungs.
**Glossary of First Aid Terms**

**B - C**

**Baby:** For the purpose of First Aid a baby is a child under 1 year.

**Breathing:** The passage of air in and out of the lungs.

**Bruise:** An injury causing bleeding under the skin.

**Capillary:** The smallest blood vessels.

**Cardiac:** To do with the heart.

**Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR):** A life saving procedure that includes the timed external compression (pushing) on the casualty’s chest (to stimulate blood flow) by pumping the heart, and alternating with mouth to mouth breathing to provide oxygen. Usually administered as 30 chest compressions to every 2 breaths.

**Cardiovascular System:** The heart and the blood vessels that circulate blood around the body.
Circulatory System: The circulatory system is composed of the heart, arteries, capillaries and veins. It transports blood low in oxygen from the body to the lungs and heart (via veins) and oxygenated blood from the lungs and heart throughout the body (via arteries).

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Casualty: The person who is ill or injured.

Cerebro-Spinal Fluid: Fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord to protect it.

Cervical: To do with the neck.

Child: For First Aid a child is between 1 year old and puberty.

Chronic: continuing over a long period of time.

Cerebro-Spinal Fluid: Fluid that surrounds the brain and spinal cord to protect it.
**Compression:** Increasing physical pressure on a (vital) structure. To compress or squash. (Compression with head injuries is the pressure caused when the brain swells following an injury).

**Clammy:** Cold and wet skin – particularly the palms of hands.

**Concussion:** Shaking of the brain or temporary damage to the brain following a head injury.

**Conscious:** To be awake and respond to speech. **Semi-conscious** – to respond to touch. **Unconscious/unresponsive** – no response to pain

**Contract:** to get smaller/narrower – particularly used when talking about pupils in the eyes and blood vessels.

**Convulsion:** A fit or seizure

**Coronary Artery:** The blood vessels supplying the heart.
Cyanosed: blue grey colour of the skin showing lack of oxygen.

Dehydration: Insufficient (not enough) fluid in the body because of loss of body water or not drinking enough.

Defibrillation: Delivering a dose of electrical energy to the affected heart with a device called a defibrillator to stop the heart shaking.

Deoxygenated: Does not contain much oxygen.

Diabetes: a disease affecting the ability to regulate the level of sugar (glucose) in the blood.

Dilate: to get bigger – particularly used when talking about pupils in the eyes and blood vessels.

Dislocation: When a bone or a joint is no longer in the right place.

Febrile: Relates to a fever or high body temperature.
**Hypoxia**: Low levels of Oxygen in the blood.

**Inflammation**: Redness, heat and swelling around an injury.

**Insulin**: A hormone secreted by the pancreas that allows us to use and store sugar – it is this hormone that struggles in Diabetes.

**Ligament**: A band of fibrous tissue that connects bones or cartilage to support and strengthen joints.

**Graze**: Usually a minor injury removing the top layer of skin.

**Hyper**: High

**Hypo**: Low

**Fracture**: A broken bone.

**Fit**: Seizure or convulsion
Glossary of First Aid Terms

Respiration: Breathing

Nausea: Feeling sick.

Paediatrics: To do with babies and children.

Pulmonary: to do with the lungs.

Rescue Breaths: Blowing air into an unconscious casualty through the nose or mouth to get the chest to rise and get air into their lungs to re-oxygenate them.

Respiration: Breathing

Re-oxygenate: To give more oxygen to someone or something.

Rotation: To turn.
**Glossary of First Aid Terms**

**Scald:** A burn from a hot liquid.

**Seizure:** A fit or convulsion.

**Shock:** A serious condition when there is not enough oxygen in the tissues and brain which results in a drop in blood pressure and leads to the body shutting down and if untreated can be fatal. Often due to a major bleed.

**Semi Conscious:** Only responds slightly to pain, should be put into the recovery position if on their back.

**Signs:** In a medical sense – what you observe when looking at the casualty. Pale, cold and clammy.

**Soiled dressings:** Dressings with blood or other body fluids.

**Soft Tissue:** The tissues of the body that are not bone – particularly to do with joints.
Glossary of First Aid Terms

Spinal cord: The nerve fibres within the backbone (spine) which allow nerves to connect between the brain and muscles.

Spinal injury: An injury to the backbone which can lead to spinal cord damage which can cause paralysis (inability to move).

Sprain: An injury to ligaments.

Strain: An injury to a muscle.

Stroke: A bleed or blocking of a blood vessel of the brain.

Superficial: Not very serious.

Symptom: What a casualty experiences and feels – eg ‘it hurts’ ‘I feel sick’.

Syncope: A medical word to faint.
**Glossary of First Aid Terms**

**T - V**

**Unconscious:** Does not respond to pain.

**Thoracic:** The area in the rib cage containing the lungs.

**Trauma:** An injury.

**Tendon:** A fibrous, strong, connective tissue that connects muscle to bone.

**Unresponsive:** Another word for unconscious – does not respond to pain.

**Vein:** A blood vessel that carries deoxygenated blood back to the lungs to be re-oxygenated.

**To stem the bleeding:** To stop blood coming out.
Ventricular Fibrillation (VF):
Uncontrolled quivering / shaking of the ventricles of the heart that mean it cannot pump effectively. VF is a shockable rhythm which means that if a defibrillator recognises that someone is in this rhythm it will try and shock them out of it.

Ventricle: Lower chamber of the heart.

Vertebrae/ Spine: The backbone.

Wound: The injury.