

# 7 Essential First Aid Skills for Carers



## First Aid for Carers



**Emma Hammett RGN**

### Why Carers are so important:

These days, many of us have caring roles, both personally and professionally. There has been much talk in the press about the 'sandwich generation', where people in their 30s and 40s are now not only caring for their children but are caring for elderly parents too.

People are living longer, and families are growing increasingly responsible for the care of elderly relatives. There are also home carers, foster carers, professional carers and those working in care homes.

Carers do essential work looking after the more vulnerable population with physical and learning disabilities.

Many people don't realise they count as a carer. Being a carer does not necessarily mean you are caring for someone twenty-four hours a day. You may be doing less hours but still being of critical support to someone. To find out if you meet the criteria of a carer and qualify for the support they receive read our "[Support for carers](#)" article

### How often do accidents occur

Carers have a wide range of responsibilities and keeping those in their care safe is paramount. No matter how vigilant they are, accidents and medical emergencies do happen – and that is why first aid training is vital.

Accident statistics from RoSPA 2020:

- The home is the most common location for an accident to happen
- Every year across the UK, there are approximately 6,000 deaths as a result of home accidents
- Children under the age of five years and people in later life (those over the age of 65, and particularly those over 75) are most likely to have an accident at home
- Falls are the most common accidents and can cause serious injury at any time of life, but the risk increases with age
- Surprisingly, more accidents happen in the lounge/living room than anywhere else in the home

Prompt and appropriate first aid, saves lives, prevents minor injuries becoming major ones and can reduce pain and scarring.

Ensuring carers are confident and competent coping in a medical emergency is vital for the wellbeing of the person they care for.

**[Click here for our award-winning online First Aid for Carers course](#)**

# 7 essential first aid skills for carers



## 5 ways to save someone's life

### Unresponsive

1. Open the airway, tilt head and lift chin



2. Check for normal breathing for up to 10 seconds



3. If they're breathing normally: put them in the recovery position



Then call 999/112 for emergency help

### Unresponsive and not breathing normally

1. Call for help. Ask bystander to call 999 and find AED. If alone, put phone on speaker



2. Give 30 Chest compressions at a rate of 100–120 per minute 5–6 cm depth



3. Give two rescue breaths. If unwilling or unable, just do chest compressions

4. Use the AED if available

5. Keep going until help arrives

### Choking

1. See if they can cough



2. If they can't cough Give up to 5 firm back blows between their shoulder blades



If that doesn't work call 999/112.



3. Give up to five abdominal thrusts

If they lose consciousness start CPR

### Bleeding

Wear gloves if available

1. Press firmly on wound and maintain pressure



2. If the bleeding will not stop call 999/112 for emergency help

3. Treat for shock if they are feeling sick or dizzy



### Anaphylaxis

1. Lie the casualty down and elevate their legs (unless they are struggling to breathe in which case sit them down)



2. Help them administer their adrenalin autoinjector



Phone for an ambulance immediately



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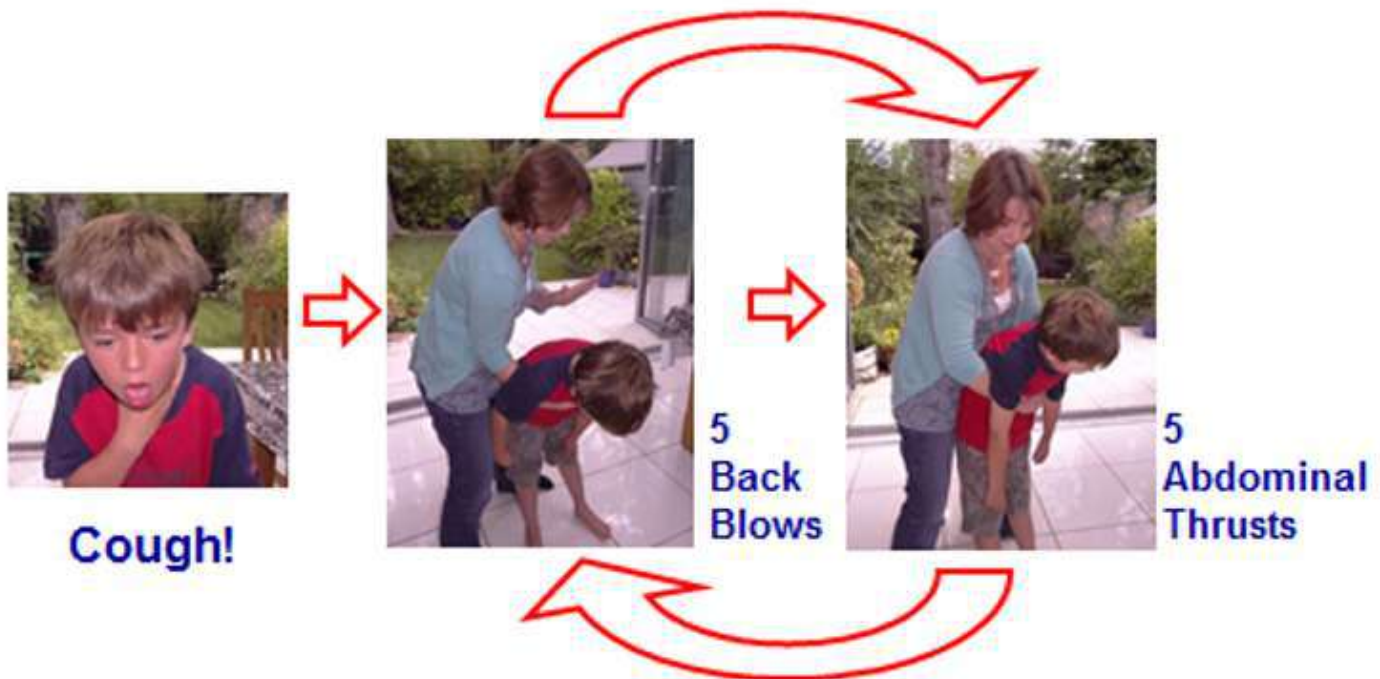
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### Choking:

If someone is choking you must stay calm

1. Encourage the child or adult to cough
2. If this doesn't work bend them forward, supporting them on their chest with the other hand and use the flat of your hand to give a sharp back blow between the shoulder blades. Check to see if the blockage has cleared before giving another blow.
3. If the blockage hasn't cleared after five blows, begin abdominal thrusts. Stand behind the person and place one hand in a fist between their belly button and their rib cage. Use the other hand to pull up and under in a J shaped motion, to dislodge the obstruction. Perform abdominal thrusts up to 5 times, checking each time to see if the obstruction has cleared.
4. If the person is still choking, call 999 and alternate 5 back blows and 5 abdominal thrusts until emergency help arrives





**If they lose consciousness and stop breathing – Start CPR**

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## Bleeding:

If someone is bleeding you should sit or lie them down and elevate the bleeding area above the level of the heart to slow down the bleeding. Click [here](#) to read more about major bleeds and shock

### Bleeding

Wear gloves if available

1. Press firmly on wound and maintain pressure



2. If the bleeding will not stop call 999/112 for emergency help



3. Treat for shock if they are feeling sick or dizzy

## Anaphylaxis:

In the UK, an estimated 2 million people are living with a diagnosed food allergy. Anaphylaxis can proceed rapidly and failure to administer adrenaline promptly has been associated with fatalities, therefore it's essential to know the signs and how to respond in an emergency. To find out why anaphylaxis occurs and be ready to help, click [here](#)



## What are the symptoms of anaphylaxis?

<b>Mild/moderate allergic reaction</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swollen lips, face or eyes</li> <li>Itchy/tingling mouth</li> <li>Hives or itchy skin rash</li> <li>Abdominal pain or vomiting</li> <li>Sudden change in behaviour</li> </ul>	<b>Action</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay with the casualty, call for help if necessary</li> <li>Locate adrenaline autoinjector(s)</li> <li>Give antihistamine</li> <li>Phone emergency contact</li> <li>If vomited can repeat antihistamine dose</li> <li>Monitor closely and be ready to give adrenaline immediately if symptoms worsen</li> </ul>
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## Watch for signs of ANAPHYLAXIS

(life-threatening allergic reaction)

Anaphylaxis may occur without skin symptoms: ALWAYS consider anaphylaxis in someone with know food allergy who has SUDDEN BREATHING DIFFICULTY

 <b>Airway</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persistent cough</li> <li>Vocal changes (hoarse voice)</li> <li>Difficulty in swallowing</li> <li>Swollen tongue</li> </ul>	 <b>Breathing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficult or noisy breathing</li> <li>Wheezing (like an asthma attack)</li> </ul>	 <b>Consciousness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persisten dizziness</li> <li>Pale or floppy</li> <li>Suddenly sleepy</li> <li>Colapse, unconscious</li> </ul>
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### IF ANY ONE (OR MORE) OF THESE SIGNS ABOVE ARE PRESENT

1. Lie casualty flat with legs raised (if breathing is difficult, allow casualty to sit)



2. Use Adrenaline autoinjector **without delay**



3. Dial 999 for ambulance and say ANAPHYLAXIS ("ANA-FIL-AX-IS")



**IF IN DOUBT, GIVE ADRENALINE**

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### Seizures:

Seizures can be alarming. One in twenty people will have a seizure at some point in their lives, so it's vital to know what to do to help. For a complete guide on seizures, convulsions and epilepsy click [here](#).



### Managing seizures

- Don't put anything in their mouth
- Don't restrain them



- Protect their dignity
- If the seizure lasts **more than 5 minutes** phone an ambulance

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### Falls:



## Getting up after a fall

- 1 Lie still for a couple of minutes and check you really are not hurt



- 2 Look for something sturdy to pull yourself up onto and crawl or manoeuvre yourself over to it.



- 3 Move onto your knees and find a stable piece of furniture to use to get yourself up.



- 4 Bend up one leg and plant your foot firmly on the ground. Use the stable piece of furniture to carefully push yourself up. Take your time.



- 5 Remain supported with your head forward until you are sure you have got your balance. Carefully push up to a standing position.

Take time to recover and phone someone to tell them what has happened.



Having a fall could be an indicator of a treatable underlying health problem. It is sensible to make an appointment with your GP for a check-up.

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If someone has had a minor injury and just has a superficial injury you can:

1. Apply a wrapped ice pack or instant cold pack to the injured area for 10 minutes.
2. Observe the person carefully for the next 24 hours. If you notice any worrying signs get medical help immediately.
3. If the incident has occurred close to bedtime and the person falls asleep soon afterwards, check in continually to look for anything unusual (twitching limbs or disturbances in colour or breathing)

It is perfectly okay for someone to go to sleep (so long as they are not showing any signs of concussion and there is no risk of confusing tiredness with losing consciousness) – there is no need to stay awake following a head injury.

## 7 essential first aid skills for carers

### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS TO LOOK OUT FOR FOLLOWING A HEAD INJURY

The following signs and symptoms can appear immediately or over the next couple of days.  
Keep a close eye on the casualty and get medical advice if at all concerned.



#### Observed by others

- Appears stunned or dazed
- Loses consciousness ( even briefly)
- Is confused about events
- Trouble thinking or concentrating
- Can't recall events prior or after event
- Shows behaviour or personality changes
- Answer questions slowly and repeats questions
- Has difficulty remembering things and organising themselves



#### Experienced by Casualty

- Headache or pressure in the head
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Sensitivity to light or noise
- Does not feel right
- Blurred vision or double vision
- Feel "Dazed", sluggish, foggy or groggy
- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Feeling irritable, sad, nervous or more emotional
- Sleep disturbances

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### First aid courses with First Aid for Life

First Aid for Life specialise in providing exemplary first aid training to comply with the mandatory first aid training requirements for Home Carers, Foster Carers and Care Homes. Our [online First Aid course for Carers](#) cover all the necessary aspects of the Care Act and will equip all Carers with the skills and confidence to help the specific age groups they are responsible for, in a medical emergency. They also offer bespoke courses for those working in particular settings, with specific sets of needs. The courses are designed to teach you all you need to know in order to help someone experiencing a medical emergency.

We have a full range of socially distanced and covid-secure, practical, online and remote learning options.

***“The team at First Aid for Life tailored the course to meet our specific needs of dealing with the complexities of caring for an elderly woman with Parkinsons. They came to our home to perform the training so that we didn’t need to worry about using an agency to care for nanna. Would recommend this service to anyone”***



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First Aid for Carers



*Click the image to learn more: Award-Winning Online First Aid for Carers Course*

If you are trusting the safety and wellbeing of your child or parent with someone else, please make sure that they have had thorough training and have the skills and knowledge to confidently help in an emergency. First Aid for Life training is different from other providers: our trainers are highly experienced health and emergency services professionals. Courses are held in small groups and we only award our certificates once we have ensured that each individual has fully understood everything and would be competent and confident in an emergency situation.

We care every bit as much as you do about the well-being of your loved one.

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**Slips, Trips and Fractured Hips** is an award-winning Amazon bestseller, written for people caring for older friends and relatives; children caring for elderly parents, for spouses, for older people wanting to keep themselves that bit safer and for anyone working with or caring for older people. It is designed to help you take measures to prevent life-threatening injuries and help you plan, prepare and avoid mishap.



Click here to buy your copy : <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Slips-Trips-Fractured-Hips-prevention-ebook/dp/B079MD88ZL>

### About us

Written by Emma Hammett RGN – Founder and CEO of First Aid for Life.

First Aid for Life is the leading provider of first aid training for carers, families, older people, schools, parents, child carers and health workers. Our team are highly experienced medical, health and emergency services professionals who will tailor the training to your needs.

It is strongly advised that you attend a First Aid course to understand what to do in a medical emergency. First Aid for Life run specific courses covering in detail how to help someone having an asthma attack.

Please visit [www.firstaidforlife.org.uk](http://www.firstaidforlife.org.uk), [emma@firstaidforlife.org.uk](mailto:emma@firstaidforlife.org.uk) or tel: 0208 675 4036 for more information about our courses.

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