

# **Block-8 Unit 30**

## ***First Aid***

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# Objectives

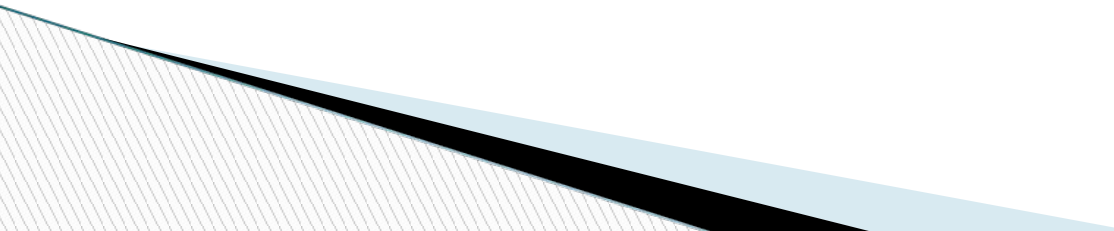
- ▣ **Know how to make the environment safe for children**
- ▣ **Give first aid in cases of burns, cuts and wounds, fractures, electric shock, poisoning, foreign bodies, drowsiness and fits**

# **Preventing Injuries and Accidents**

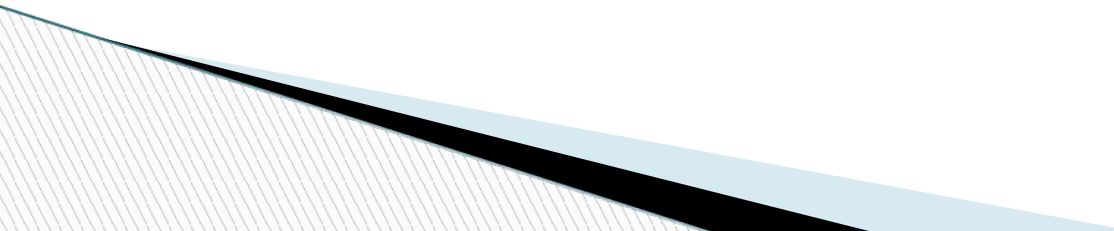
**A child gets injured because of an accident, and accidents happen when the environment of the child is not safe. The adults looking after the child have to consciously avoid dangerous situations, and must always be alert, especially when there is a toddler who has not yet understood about danger. Children are often in danger of harming themselves, because as they are growing, they are finding out about the world around them by touching, tasting or handling things that could injure them. They are too young to know about danger, and have not yet experienced the hazards that are present in the immediate environment.**

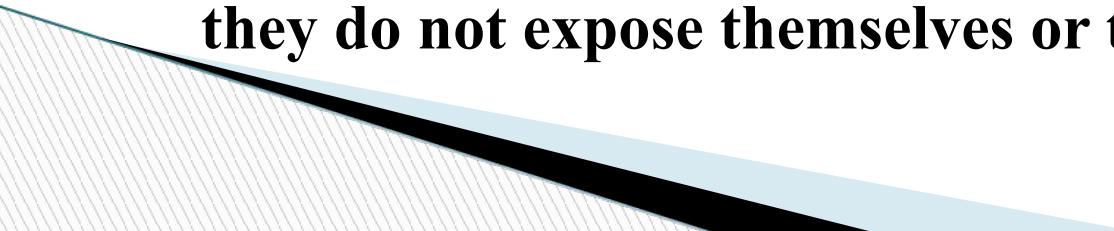


**Therefore, it is very important to take all precautions to prevent accidents. Making the environment less dangerous is one of the best ways of preventing accidents. The following are some precautions which, if taken, can greatly reduce the incidence of accidents and injuries.**



## **❑ Simple Precautions**

- 1) Never leave babies and toddlers alone in the house.**
  - 2) Keep all dangerous tools, like knives and scissors, out of reach of children. Remove sharp objects like broken glass and needles from the floor.**
  - 3) Prevent children from going near fire or the cooking area to prevent them from getting burnt or tipping hot liquids on themselves.**
  - 4) Cover all large containers of water to prevent drowning.**
  - 5) Keep all medicines out of reach of children.**
  - 6) As far as possible, keep the house and environment clean of poisonous insects and animals.**
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- 7) See that children do not play with matches or fireworks.**
  - 8) Ensure that beds, tables, chairs and ladders at home are safe for use. Remove any nails that are sticking out.**
  - 9) Children climb over furniture and play. Ensure that the furniture is not shaky or broken.**
  - 10) If living on the first floor or above, put a gate on the top of the stairs that reach your home.**
  - 11) Children sometimes put their head, leg or arm between bars and may not be able to pull it back. Take out the limb or head gently. Pulling it roughly will injure the child.**
  - 12) Do not throw the child up in the air and play. You may miss to catch her and she may fall.**
  - 13) Educate the older children about accidents and see that they do not expose themselves or their siblings to risks.**
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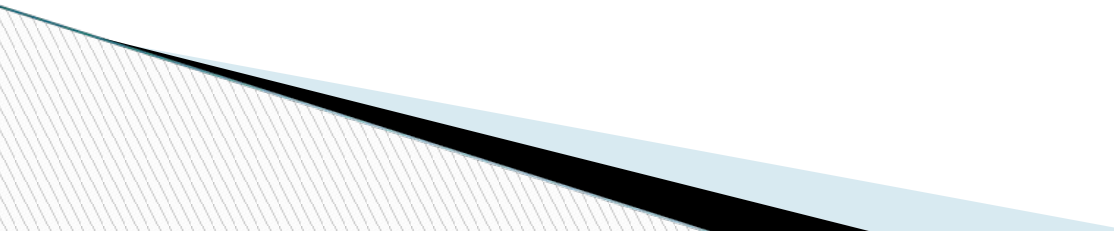
# Giving First Aid

**When an accident has happened, we have to quickly render first aid before the doctor reaches the child. This is to prevent serious complications like choking, bleeding to death, dying of shock or poisoning. Timely intervention may save a life.**

**We shall now read about some conditions where timely first aid by the parents or the child care worker can prevent complications.**

## **□ Burns**

**Children may touch a flame, fall into the stove, pour hot liquids on themselves or have fireworks burst in their faces. All these cause burns.**



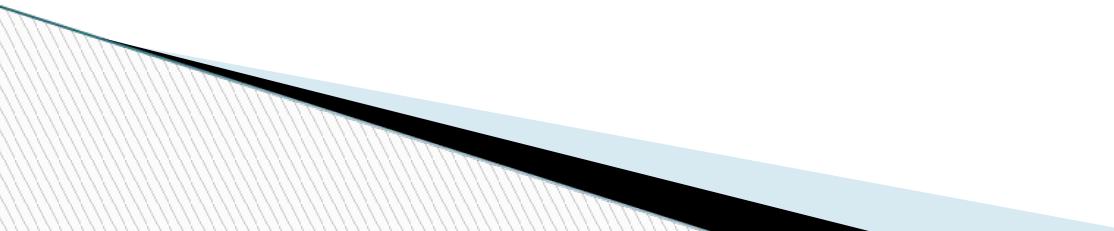
**A burn becomes serious and life threatening on account of the following reasons:**

- a) The pain is so severe that the child may go into shock.**
- b) The extent and site of burns causing bodily harm like blindness or permanent danger to a limb.**
- c) The depth of the burn on the skin, leading to tissue damage and dehydration.**

## **❑ Treatment of Burns**

- Immediately immerse the burnt part in cold water. This will cool the skin and prevent the burn from becoming deeper, if done within half an hour. If ice is available apply ice to the burnt part, as soon as the burn occurs.**



- **Superficial burns of the skin destroy only the epidermis (top layer of the skin) and cause severe redness and burning sensation. These are called scalds. They can be alleviated by immersing the burnt part in cold water.**
  - **Deeper burns develop vesicles on blisters after two days.**
  - **Burns of the full thickness of the skin are more serious and will take longer to heal. They may need skin grafts, and may cause contractures of the skin.**
  - **The percentage of burns is decided by the doctor depending on the extent and site of the burn.**
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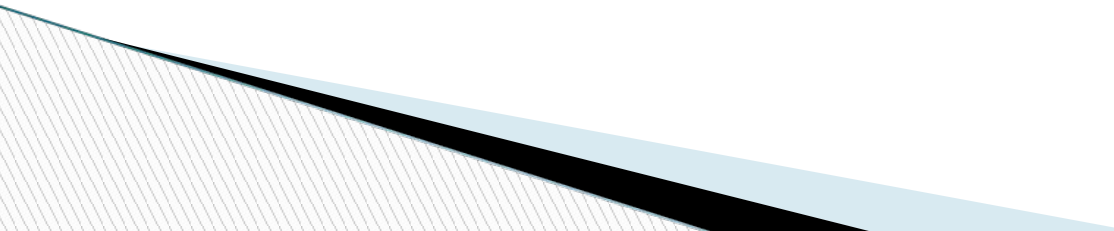
**Except for superficial burns, all other cases have to be referred to the hospital, after rendering first aid.**

- **If the skin is broken, cover it with vaseline gauze or apply Burnol and lightly cover it to prevent flies and other insects sitting on it. If there are blisters, see that they are not broken. Do not put plain cotton on the burnt parts as it will stick to the flesh.**

## ❑ **Bruises, Cuts and Wounds**

**Children tend to fall while they are trying to climb a bench, or a tree etc. they may bang against or get hit by a hard object. In all these cases, they get a bruise. A bruise is a bluish painful discolouration of the skin, and is due to accumulation of blood in the skin caused by injured capillaries. It lasts for at least 10 days. There is no treatment for a bruise.**

**A cut may occur when children hurt themselves with sharp objects like knives, blades scissors or get scratched with nails etc. If the cut is deep, blood spurts out immediately. If it occurs in a limb, try and put a tourniquet (tight band) on the side nearer the heart to prevent bleeding through the artery. The tourniquet should not be tied for more than 15 minutes.**



**Clean the cut with sterile water, dress it with some antiseptic cream and bandage firmly.**

**Wounds are bigger than cuts. In this case try and prevent bleeding by bandaging it firmly and refer immediately to the hospital/medical centre.**

## ❑ Fractures

**If the child has a fall or is hit directly on the bone by a hard object, she will have a fracture of the bone. The pain is acute and the limb will hang limply and cannot be moved. Soon the site of the fracture starts swelling and the broken bone may be displaced.**

**Treatment : Do not try to realign the bones. Do not massage the broken limb. It is important to keep the broken bone in a fixed position, unmoved. If the broken bone is poking through the skin, do not try to push it in. Carry the child to the hospital without moving the two pieces of the bone.**

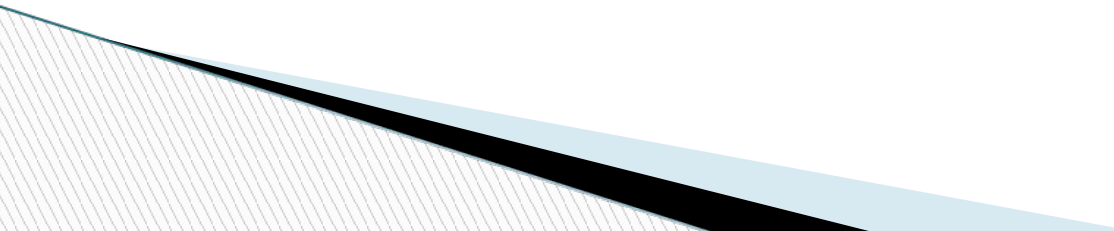
**If it is the upper limb that is broken, put the arm in a sling.**

**If it is the lower limb that is broken, do not make the child walk. Give support to the broken leg using a straight stick or a firm cardboard or anything else that is straight and firm.**

**If necessary give a crocin (Paracetamol) tablet. Take the child to a hospital immediately.**

**The child may fall from a tree or a high place and may not be unconscious. In either case, send for the health worker or the doctor immediately. In the meantime, if you need to move the child to a safe position, do it with utmost care.**

**The child should be moved 'all together' with people holding her hips, feet, heels, shoulders, arms and head. This is very important. Do not pull the child from the legs or the shoulders. Put the child on a straight and solid surface such as a cot or a stretcher. Turn the child's head to one side, so that the tongue does not fall to the back of her throat. If the tongue falls back, the child will not be able to breathe and may die. However, if the child's neck is injured do not turn it to the side.**



## ❑ **Electric Shock**

**A child can get a shock from a plug, a gadget like an iron or a toaster, or from naked electric wires that are lying on the road.**

**This can be very dangerous and if severe, the child may die instantaneously.**

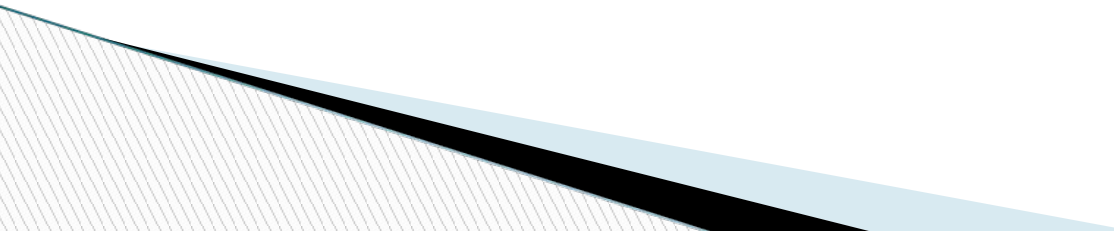
**If mild, the limb though which electricity entered, is painful and weak.**

**Treatment: Do not try to treat electric shock in the centre or the house. If the shock is severe, the child may need a glucose drip to sustain the blood pressure.**



## ❑ **Poisoning**

**Children may swallow substances that are poisonous or harmful to them. The commonest liquids that children tend to swallow are kerosene, medicines or acids used for cleaning, since these are usually lying about in the house. These liquids corrode the mucous membrane as they go down into the stomach. Therefore, the child will feel sick and the mouth and oesophagus (gullet) will feel sore. In such cases, never try to get the child to vomit, as it will further damage the tissues. Rush the child immediately to the hospital.**



## □ Bites

**A child being bitten by an animal, particularly a dog, is a common occurrence. Bites should be washed well with water and a disinfectant. In case of a dog bite, the dog should be observed. If it becomes maniacal and/or dies within 2-4 days, it should be presumed that it was rabid. If the dog has run away after biting, particularly if the attack was unprovoked, the same assumption may be made. In such a case, the child should be immediately rushed to a doctor for administration of anti-rabic vaccine to prevent rabies. However, if the dog shows no abnormal symptoms and is alive for more than ten days, it signifies that it was not rabid and the child therefore does not need the anti-rabies treatment. b**

## ❑ Foreign Bodies

**Children may put small objects like stones, sticks or beads into their ears or nose. This may cause some distress. Be careful not to push the object further up the nose or into the ear. Take the child to a health worker/doctor.**

**Sometimes, the child may swallow a foreign body which may get stuck in the throat. Or while eating, a bone may get stuck in the throat. A hard thump on the back may dislodge it. Eating a banana may help in releasing the bone. If the child is in any kind of distress, immediately refer for treatment.**

## ❑ **Drowsiness**

**A child may be normal but may gradually become drowsy, or may be brought to the centre in a drowsy state. There are many causes of drowsiness.**

- 1) Undernourishment is a common cause. An undernourished child will be uninterested in the surroundings. The child is fully conscious.**
- 2) If the child has complained of a headache and is becoming drowsy, you must look for signs of meningitis (vomiting, rigidity of the neck).**

- 3) The child may have swallowed some medicines that is making her drowsy.**
- 4) If there is jaundice and the child is drowsy, it is a serious condition of liver failure.**
- 5) Soon after an epileptic fit the child may be drowsy.**

**In all cases of drowsiness, refer child to doctor.**

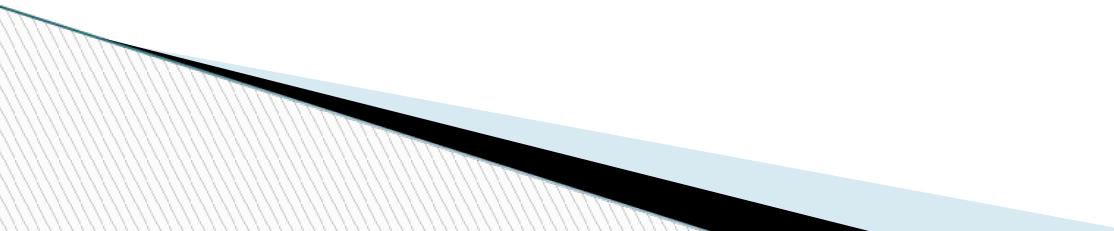


## ❑ Fits

**Fits are involuntary and uncontrollable spasms that may effect the whole body, or the limbs on one side only.**

**Apart from febrile fits (described in Unit 28), the commonest condition causing fits is epilepsy. Epilepsy is a condition when the child may have fits from early childhood. Epilepsy is caused by abnormal electrical impulses in the brain and is not infectious or contagious.**

**Besides epilepsy, the other causes of fits are**

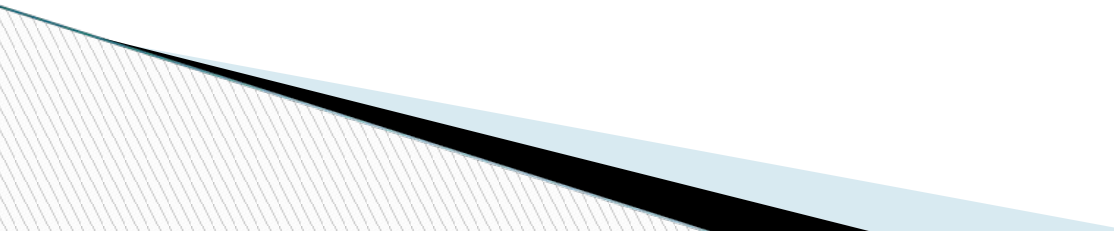
- Meningitis**
  - Brain damage**
  - Scarring in the brain due to injury**
  - Brain abscess**
  - Chemical poisoning**
  - High fever**
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## **□ Drowning**

**Children who are playing near water tanks are in danger of falling into water and drowning. The obvious action is to prevent such accidents.**

**If a child has fallen into water, she cannot breathe. Initially she swallows a lot of water and when she tries to breathe, water gets into the lungs.**

**The immediate action needed is to try and get the water out of the lungs, so that the child can breathe again. Put her face down on a flat surface, and press the base of the lungs gently and rhythmically, until the child starts breathing.**





**If possible, hold both ankles of the child, hold her upside down and swing her around until she coughs, and the water is spat out. Then rush her to a hospital.**

### **WHEN AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS**

- AVOID PANIC**
- GIVE CONFIDENCE**
- SEND FOR THE HEALTH WORKER**
- DO ONLY WHAT IS NECESSARY**

*Thank You*