Severe bleeding

IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE.

DRSABCD Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation
The DRSABCD Action Plan is the first step when providing first aid. Use this to assess the immediate situation.

WARNING

• Any severe bleeding should be stopped as soon as possible
• DO NOT give the patient anything to eat or drink
• Wear gloves, if possible, to prevent infection.
• If an object is embedded in or protruding from a wound, apply pressure on either side of the wound and place pads around the object before bandaging.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS
As well as the obvious sign of blood coming from a wound, signs and symptoms of severe bleeding include:
• weak, rapid pulse
• pale, cool, moist skin
• pallor, sweating
• rapid, gasping breathing
• restlessness
• nausea
• thirst
• faintness, dizziness or confusion
• loss of consciousness.

WHAT TO DO

1 Follow DRSABCD.
2 Help the patient to lie down, particularly if the bleeding is severe.
3 Remove or cut the patient’s clothing to expose the wound.
4 Ask the patient to apply direct pressure over the wound, or as close to the point of the bleeding as possible. If the patient is unable to apply pressure, use a pad or your hands.
5 Squeeze the wound edges together if possible.
6 Apply a pad over the wound if not already in place.
7 Secure the pad by bandaging over it. Ensure the pad remains over the wound.
8 If bleeding is still not controlled, leave the initial pad in place and apply a second pad and secure it with a bandage.
9 If bleeding continues through the second pad, replace the second pad leaving the first pad in place, and rebandage.
10 Do not give the severely bleeding patient any food or drink, and call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.
11 Check every 15 minutes that the bandages are not too tight and that there is circulation below the wound.
12 Continue to check the patient’s breathing.

If the bleeding can not be controlled, consider applying a tourniquet. Only apply a tourniquet if bleeding can not be controlled by direct pressure, the equipment is available, and the first aider is trained in the use of this equipment.