



MEDIA RELEASE

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Play safe this summer

Summer is the time for fun – but there are hazards to watch out for. St John wants Australians to enjoy the summer safely and has a few tips and first aid suggestions that might help.

Most importantly – keep a first aid kit handy. You never know when you might need it. Think about doing a first aid course so that you are even more prepared to help your friends and family in an emergency.

Following are some first aids tips to help you through the summer.

Sunburn

Nowadays we all do our best to keep out of the sun in the middle of the day, but sometimes people do get caught out. If this happens, then the casualty should rest in a cool place with a cool drink and if possible take a cold shower or bath, or sponge themselves down with cold water. Apply cool gauze padding to the burnt area and always seek medical aid for young babies and casualties with blisters.

Bluebottle stings

Pick off any tentacles with tweezers or your fingers – DON'T try to wash the sting off with fresh water. Apply a cold pack to reduce the pain.

Snake bites

Avoid snake bites by always wearing shoes outside, making lots of noise when walking in the bush, keeping the grass cut around your home and not putting your hands and feet into areas that you can't see into.

For a case of snakebite use a roller bandage (about 10-15cm wide), pantyhose or other similar material, to firmly bandage the entire limb, but not so firmly as to stop the flow of blood. Start bandaging from just above the fingers or toes and work upwards and the splint the bandaged limb. Don't let the casualty move and 000 for an ambulance.

There are a few important 'don'ts when it comes to snakebites:

DON'T cut the bitten area.

DON'T suck the venom out or wash venom off.

DON'T apply a tourniquet.

DON'T try to catch the snake

Bee stings

Remove stings by scraping sideways with your fingernail or with the edge of a knife and then apply a cold pack.

If you see any signs of an allergic reaction, like breathing difficulties, a rash, itching or swelling around the mouth or eyelids, call 000 for an ambulance. If the casualty has allergy medication then help them to take it immediately. While you are waiting for the ambulance, observe and note down the casualty's pulse and breathing.

If the casualty is conscious help them to sit in whatever position best relieves breathing difficulties. If the casualty is unconscious, open and clear their airway and prepare to resuscitate if necessary.

Heat exhaustion

Someone suffering from heat exhaustion should be helped to lie down in a cool place with circulating air and remove or loosen all clothing. Sponge the casualty with cold water and give them fluids to drink. Seek medical aid if casualty vomits or does not recover promptly.

Burns

Hold the burned area under cool running water for at least ten minutes – DON'T break any blisters or apply any lotions or ointments. Put a sterile non-adherent dressing over burned area (or foil, plastic wrap, or a wet clean dressing). Seek medical aid if the burn is bigger than a twenty-cent piece.

Near drowning

Please never attempt a rescue beyond your capability – don't become a casualty yourself. To help, follow the St John DRABCD Action Plan – **Danger, Response, Airway, Breathing, CPR and Defibrillator**.

The first step is to check for any **Danger** to you, the casualty and any others at the accident scene. You don't want to become the next casualty and be unable to help others.

Check for a **Response** from the casualty by gently squeezing their shoulders and shouting.

Then check the **Airway** — open the casualty's mouth and look for any foreign material. If you see anything, turn the casualty into the recovery position while supporting their neck and spine and remove any foreign objects. If you don't see anything, leave the casualty on their back.



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Next, check **Breathing** — look, listen and feel. If the casualty is breathing, place them in the recovery position, check regularly for signs of life and manage any injuries. Seek medical aid.

If the casualty is not breathing, call 000 for an ambulance. Turn the casualty onto their back and tilt the head back. Lift the casualty's chin to open the airway, pinch their nose closed and breathe into their mouth for about one second. Watch the chest rise and fall. Repeat the sequence to give two initial breaths, ensuring that the chest rises with each breath.

Then check for signs of life. If there are no signs of life – the casualty is not breathing, not responding and not moving, commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation (**CPR**).

If the casualty shows signs of life, place them in recovery position, assess and manage any bleeding and other injuries. Continue to monitor the casualty's breathing, movement and consciousness until medical aid arrives.

If there is a defibrillator available, attach it to the casualty and follow the voice prompts.

Prevent accidents around water

Some simple precautions can make your time at the beach or the pool safer. Make sure your entire family can swim and always supervise children when they are near water. Always swim between the flags and never drink before swimming.

Why not keep your first aid skills up to date by booking into a St John First Aid refresher course? Contact 1300 360 455 or visit www.stjohnnsw.com.au for further information

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For further information, please contact Kate Kelly, Communications Officer on 9219 6856 or 0410 220 872.