

SPINAL INJURY



Managing a spinal injury

Signs & symptoms

- pain at or below site of injury
- loss of sensation, or abnormal sensation such as tingling in hands or feet
- loss of movement or impaired movement below site of injury

WARNING

Take extreme care at all times to maintain alignment of the head, neck and spine.

If the patient is unconscious as a result of a head injury, always suspect a spinal injury.

Management

▼ Unconscious patient

1. Follow DRSABCD
2. Place unconscious patient in recovery position supporting neck and spine in a neutral position at all times to prevent twisting or bending movements.
3. Maintain a clear and open airway.
4. If ambulance is delayed, apply a cervical collar, if trained to do so, to minimise neck movement.
5. Ensure an ambulance has been called: triple zero (000).

▼ Conscious patient

1. Calm the patient and loosen tight clothing.
2. Do not move the patient unless in danger.
3. Support head, neck and spine in a neutral position at all times to prevent twisting or bending movements.
4. If ambulance is delayed, apply a cervical collar, if trained to do so, to minimise neck movement.
5. Ensure an ambulance has been called: triple zero (000)

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

For more information on St John first aid training and kits, visit www.stjohn.org.au or freecall 1300 360 455

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