

Workplace first aid

Home care handouts

Introduction

First aid attendants provide immediate care to workers who are injured at the workplace. When an injury is not serious and does not require referral to medical aid, an injured worker may still need to take some follow-up measures at home.

If you are a first aid attendant, you can use these handouts to give home care information to workers with the following injury types:

- Small wounds and cuts
- Sprains
- Tendinitis
- Flash burns and snow blindness
- Minor burns
- Minor back strains

When you provide one of these handouts to an injured worker, discuss the home care instructions with them to make sure they understand them. You should also note in the first aid record that you provided the handout.

Small wounds and cuts

You have an open wound. With proper care, it should start to feel better in about three to four days. The healing process will be more effective if you follow this advice:

- Keep dressings clean and dry.
- If skin closures have been applied, keep them in place for 7 to 10 days.
- When bathing or showering, cover dressings to prevent moisture from entering.
- Report to first aid within 24 to 48 hours after the injury. The first aid attendant will reassess and rebandage your wound.

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor. You should notice some redness around the wound as it heals. You may also notice slight pain the day following the injury. This is also part of the natural healing process.

If at any time you notice that pain, redness, and swelling increase significantly, or if pus or red streaks are coming from the wound, report to the first aid attendant. The attendant may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Sprains

A sprain is stretching or a partial or complete tear of a ligament at a joint.

You have suffered a mild sprain involving a stretching of the ligaments. With proper care, it should start to feel better in about three to four days. The healing process will be more effective if you follow this advice:

- Whenever possible, elevate the limb.
- As a post-treatment measure, continue to apply cold (i.e., a cold agent cooler than the skin, such as an ice pack or a cold pack) for the next 24 to 48 hours. Apply cold for 20 minutes on, then 5 minutes off.
- If a crepe bandage was applied, remove it for sleeping.
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift. A first aid attendant will reassess and rebandage the limb if necessary.

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

You may notice some pain the following day when bearing weight. With the crepe bandage removed, you may notice increased swelling when the limb is not elevated. If at any time you become unable to bear weight or the pain and swelling increase significantly, report to a first aid attendant. The attendant may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Tendinitis

Tendinitis is inflammation of a tendon.

You have tendinitis (also called repetitive strain injury or RSI) from excessive, unaccustomed activity. With proper care, it should start to feel better in about three to four days. The healing process will be more effective if you follow this advice:

- Avoid motion that aggravates the tendon.
- If a small working splint or brace was applied, keep it in place as much as possible, but you can remove it for sleeping.
- As a post-treatment measure, continue to apply cold (i.e., a cold agent cooler than the skin, such as an ice pack or cold pack) for the next 24 to 48 hours. Apply cold for 20 minutes on, then 5 minutes off.
- Alternating cold and heat may also help with healing.
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift. The first aid attendant will reassess and reapply the splint if necessary.

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

You may notice minor pain the following day. If at any time pain and swelling increase significantly, report to a first aid attendant. The attendant may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Flash burns and snow blindness

Flash burns and snow blindness are burns to the surface of the cornea.

Direct or reflected ultraviolet light from an electric arc or welding torch may cause a flash burn. Corneal burns become more painful after some hours, depending on the severity and length of exposure. Although flash burns are very uncomfortable, they are not serious and usually heal in 12 to 24 hours. The healing process will be more effective if you follow this advice:

- Apply cold compresses to help reduce pain.
- Avoid bright lights, as they may aggravate the flash burns.
- Try wearing dark glasses to relieve some of the pain.
- Use mild pain medication (ASA or acetaminophen) if you have trouble sleeping.
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift. A first aid attendant will reassess and document any symptoms you are experiencing.

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

You may notice minor pain the following day. This is normal. If at any time the pain increases significantly, report to a first aid attendant. The attendant may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Minor burns

You have a minor burn.

Reddening of your skin indicates a first-degree burn. Small blisters indicate a second-degree burn.

The healing process will be more effective if you follow this advice:

- Keep the burned area covered.
- Ensure the dressings stay dry and clean.
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift. A first aid attendant will reassess and document any symptoms you are experiencing.

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

You may notice minor pain the following day. This is normal. If at any time the pain increases significantly, report to a first aid attendant. The attendant may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.

Minor back strains

You have strained the muscles or tendons in your back. With proper care, it should start to feel better in a few days to a week.

The healing process will be more effective if you follow this advice:

- Avoid motion that aggravates the muscles and tendons.
- Continue to apply cold (i.e., a cold agent cooler than the skin, such as an ice pack or cold pack) for the first 24 hours. Apply cold for 20 minutes on, then 5 minutes off.
- After 24 hours, applying heat may also help with healing.
- Report to first aid at the start of your next shift. The first aid attendant will reassess your back, including your range of motion, and will document any symptoms you are experiencing.
- Although moving around may be uncomfortable, it is important to keep active without aggravating the injury. This will help relieve muscle spasms and help strengthen back muscles.

You may need to discuss altering work activity with your supervisor.

You may notice minor pain the following day. This is normal. If at any time the pain increases significantly, report to the first aid attendant. The attendant may refer you to medical aid. If the condition becomes significantly worse while you are not at work and you decide to seek medical aid, notify the attendant as soon as possible.