

How to carry out a primary survey using DR ABCDE

You can remember the key steps of the primary survey with the acronym DR ABCDE

Danger



Assess the area for any dangers that could put you, the casualty or anyone else at risk, for example fire or broken glass, and do what you can to make it safe. Once it is safe, you can approach the casualty. Check whether the casualty is responsive by asking if they're ok.

Response



If there's no response, gently tap or squeeze them on the shoulders. For infants, tap them on the bottom of their feet. If the casualty is not responsive, call 999 or 112 immediately and place the call on speakerphone.

Airway



Check that their airway is open and free from obstructions by placing your hand on their forehead and gently tilting their head back. Remove any visible obstructions but do not place your fingers in their mouth if none are visible.

Breathing



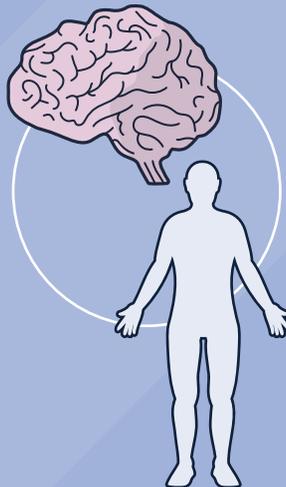
Check that the casualty is breathing normally. Look for chest movements, listen for breathing sounds and feel for air from their mouth on your cheek for 10 seconds. If they are unresponsive but breathing normally, put them in the recovery position.

Circulation



If the casualty is unresponsive and not breathing normally, or at all, start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). If you find the casualty is bleeding severely, this must be addressed immediately and take priority over giving CPR. If 999 or 112 has not been called yet, ensure they are called before beginning chest compressions.

Disability



The following steps are for responsive casualties only, who have a clear airway and are breathing normally.

The purpose of this step is to identify and treat (where appropriate) any life-threatening conditions that can affect brain function, such as, head injuries, hypoglycaemia or strokes.

Exposure

Keep monitoring the casualty and recheck their level of consciousness. Are they alert to time and place, or do they appear confused?

Keep the patient warm. Are there any obvious signs of injury? Report what you observe to the emergency call handler.

