



# EXPEDITION SKILLS

FIRST AID - ILLNESS  
WEEK 5

**First Aid is the first thing we do to provide help when someone is injured or ill.**

When on Expedition, you will be out in nature and away from home, so there is the possibility of becoming ill. It is important to know what to do when a member of your group gets becomes ill while on expedition. Below are some of the common things that might require First Aid, but there may be other things that happen too. Hopefully you won't need to know any of this, but it is better to Be Prepared!

**\*\*Report ALL First Aid procedures to your Supervisor. If the situation is Urgent, Tell your supervisor Immediately\*\***



### **On Expedition, you will have a First Aid Kit**

- **Know what is in your Kit**
- **Know how to Use Everything in your Kit**
- **Your Leader will go over both the kit and how to use everything in it during a First Aid session before your expedition. This is the time to Listen, Learn, and Ask Questions!**



Most of you have already completed a First Aid course in school or with us, so while some of this information may be a repeat, please go through it.

I know there seems to be a lot of information, but take your time and understand it. There is a to complete at the end which will help you to see how much you have learned. Ask me if you want help with it!

**Now, let's talk about possible ILLNESS that can happen on Expedition.**

# HYPOTHERMIA

## Hypothermia:

Expeditions will generally go ahead in all weather! This means there is the possibility of you getting Cold, Wet, or Both. Hypothermia is the term we use when someone gets very cold. It can happen slowly, and over time so take care of each other and watch for symptoms.

## Symptoms include:

- Complaining of being cold
- Becoming Quiet or less talkative
- Disorientation (not knowing where they are)
- Loss of Co-ordination (clumsy or awkward movements)

## Prevention:

- Wear Warm, Waterproof and Windproof Clothes (as appropriate – when it is cold or wet or Both!)
- Get plenty of Rest (take breaks when needed)
- Eat well (proper food will keep you warm and give you energy)

## Treatment:

Hypothermia can be seen as Cold Exhaustion. Treating the Cold:

- Keep the person moving (early stages) this will keep their blood pumping and keep them from getting any colder
- Get them into shelter (you will have your tents with you, this is a great shelter)
- Help them to change into warm and dry clothes or put warm and dry clothes over their clothes if you can't get them to change. Treating the

Exhaustion (Being very tired):

- Get more energy into the person (Feed them!) Sugary foods are best!
- Take their bags off them to give them a break

**\*\*Contact your Supervisor and Follow Emergency Procedures.\*\***



# HEAT EXHAUSTION

## Heat Exhaustion:

Just like with Hypothermia, it is possible to get Too Hot! This is called Heat Exhaustion. This is where your body gets too hot. You then sweat A LOT (your body's way of keeping cool) you lose too much salt and water from your body. **This can make you feel very ill!**

## Symptoms:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
- Sweating with pale, clammy (sticky) skin • Muscle cramps (arms, legs, stomach)
- Rapid Breathing

## Prevention:

- Drink plenty of water while out on Expedition
- Eat good, nutritious foods that give you plenty of energy
- Rest when you feel the need and sometimes in a shady spot if it is a hot day
- Wear appropriate clothing

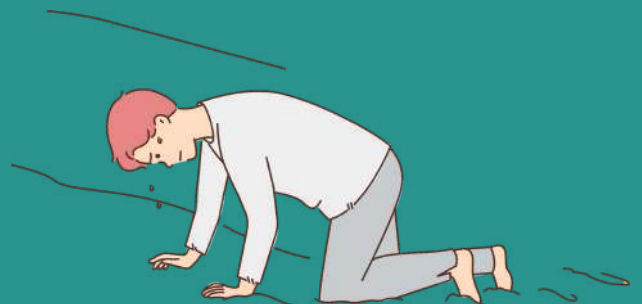
## Treatment:

- Get to a cool place and create shade if none is available (a tent or even a jacket draped over a branch can work, or use an umbrella)
- Splash some water onto skin and fan it
- Drink Plenty of water, followed by some flat sugary drink afterward to replace sugars and salts

*(this is where we say a packet of Crisps can come in handy too, eating a packet along with drinking plenty of water can provide salt and a bit of energy). Sweets are also useful immediately)*

**\*\*Heat Exhaustion can be very serious and needs to be taken seriously.\*\***

**\*\*Contact your Supervisor Immediately if you suspect a group member of having Heat Exhaustion. \*\***





# DEHYDRATION

## Dehydration:

We've all been thirsty at times, but dehydration can be very serious if left alone. Dehydration is not just about being thirsty, it is when your body loses too much water. Since our bodies are about 60% water, we need it for our bodies to work properly. **Without enough water we become very ill.**

## Symptoms:

- Feeling Thirsty
- Very concentrated urine (your wee turns darker in colour)
- Tiredness
- Disorientation (not knowing where you are)
- Vomiting (ewww!)

## Prevention:

- Drink plenty of Water or Water with Fruit Juice in it.
- Drink lots of water when on sites where there is water (from taps) and top up from your water bottle while out on walks.
- Sugary or fizzy drinks can cause you to dehydrate very quickly if you do not drink water alongside them, so limit these.

## Treatment:

- Drink! Yes, it is as simple as that, just drink water regularly, even a little bit throughout the day can keep you hydrated. Any drink will give your body water, but water is best.

**Food Poisoning** can also occur since we expect you to cook some food when on Expedition.

Symptoms: Diarrhoea, Vomiting, and generally feeling unwell.

It usually results in someone becoming **Dehydrated**, which is why I mention it here.

**If a member of your group seems to be suffering with food poisoning, please treat it as you would dehydration with plenty of fluids and rest.**

**\*\*Contact you Supervisor immediately for help\*\***



## Allergies:

Before you head out on Expedition: **PLEASE tell your Supervisor and Leader about ANY and ALL allergies (food, medicines, plants, insects, animals, etc). Allergies can be very serious, even fatal, if not treated quickly and correctly.**

### What happens during an allergic reaction?

An Allergy is our body's way of fighting a foreign substance (pollen, insect bite, or food) and sends out our body's fighting force, special cells that fight infections. These collect at the site of the 'attack' and try to fight it causing swelling and redness. Unfortunately this response by our body can mean that we get swelling so bad that it can stop us breathing, called Anaphylaxis.

### Symptoms of Allergy:

- Breathing Difficulties, Swelling of the face, hands, neck (sometimes redness too), Itchiness, Dizziness, Fainting

### Treatment: Act Quickly! **\*\*Call your Supervisor Immediately\*\* Follow Emergency Procedures**

**EpiPen** – This is a device carried by those who know they have an allergy that requires immediate help. This pen is used only in emergencies and usually the person who has the allergy will use this pen themselves.

**\*\*If the person becomes unresponsive, you may have to use the pen for them. We will go over this procedure with you before Expedition if any of your group uses an EpiPen.\*\*If a person does not have an EpiPen, then get them to sit down while you call your Supervisor for help.\*\***

## Asthma:

Asthma is quite a common illness and you will know if you have it. It can be something that is an everyday worry or it can happen in response to working out too hard or because of an allergy.

**Asthma is when the tubes in the lungs get swollen and we can't get enough oxygen into our lungs. \*\*It is important you let your Supervisor know if you have Asthma before Expedition.\*\***

### Prevention:

- Use your Blue Inhaler (Preventative) as directed by your doctor.
- Keep your inhaler in an easy-to-reach place in your kit.
- On Expedition be careful about your level of activity. Know your limits!

### Treatment:

- If you feel symptoms of asthma, Stop!
- Use own inhaler (never use anyone else's inhaler)
- Rest
- Only start up again if you feel you can, and take it slowly.
- If needed, you may also have an Emergency Inhaler, use this if you need.

**\*\*Please let your Supervisor and at least 1 member of your group know where you keep your inhaler in case of emergency\*\***

## **Insect Bites:**

Ahh, the great Outdoors! Well, it can be great, but being outdoors also can mean insects!

**They are great beasts, they have many uses and provide food for birds, but they can also make a meal out of us.** Most of us have been bitten by a bug/spider or stung by a bee or wasp. It is never fun and always causes us some discomfort. They can even make us ill.

**Bee/Wasp Stings:** OUCH!!! They can also lead you to have what is called **Anaphylaxis**. (See Allergies).

**Symptoms:** Difficulty Breathing, swelling, redness.

**Prevention:** Don't bother bees and they won't bother you! Wasps sometimes will sting (especially when they are sleepy at the end of summer). Generally, leave them alone and they will leave you alone.

**Treatment for a Sting:** If the stinger is stuck in you, remove it gently. Do Not Squeeze the area. Rinse with soap and water. Take a pain reliever if the pain is severe. You can use an anti-itching lotion if needed which will take down any swelling.

**Spider Bites:** These are rare and most spiders can't bite us because they can't get their fangs into our skin. However, if you do get bitten by a spider: Wash the area well with soap and water. If you notice swelling and redness or feel unwell, contact your Supervisor.

**Midges/Mosquitoes:** Midges are small biting insects very common to Scotland. They can be rather annoying in large clouds. They can bite!

**Prevention:** Use midge spray to keep them away or Avon's Skin so Soft also works well (even the Royal Marines use in their Kit). You can also get yourself a Midge Net to cover your face. Do not scratch bites, use a calamine (anti-itch) cream if needed. Wash well to avoid infection.

**Other Insects/Bugs:** All insects and bugs can bite/sting, or irritate. Remove any insects you see on you gently and try not to Bug them!

**\*\*Ticks: There is a separate module that talks about Ticks and Lyme Disease\*\***



**Well Done!! That is a lot of information to learn about First Aid – Illness on Expedition! Some of it is common sense, and ALL of it is important for you to know. Please complete the quiz below.**

## First Aid Illness: QUIZ

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1. What bit of Expedition Kit should you have and know how to use?
2. What is Hypothermia? What 3 things can we do to prevent it?
3. What 2 things do we treat when someone has Hypothermia?
4. Name 3 symptoms of Heat Exhaustion?
5. Name 3 Symptoms of Dehydration? What is the Best treatment?
6. What is an Allergy? What 2 things can we be allergic to?
7. What are at least 2 symptoms that show someone has an allergic reaction?
8. What is an Epipen? When should it be used?
9. What part of the body does Asthma affect? What is used to treat asthma?
10. Name 3 Insects/Bugs that could bite/sting or make you ill?
11. What should you do (who should you contact) for ALL illness while on the Expedition?



## Scenarios

Each of these scenarios has happened on Expedition. Once you have read over them, please answer what you would do if this happened to you or a member of your group while on Expedition.

**Scenario 1.** After 2 days of rain, on a 4 day expedition, a girl says she isn't feeling well. She had been off school ill but came back saying she was well and able to do her expedition. It's pouring with rain. The next campsite is only 2km away. It's 7 hours to a road across very wild country. She starts to stumble. She is shivery. She goes quiet. When you try to talk to her she just mumbles. She can walk but her rucksack is slowing her down. What does the group do?

**Scenario 2.** Going up a steep hill a boy starts to struggle with his breathing. He begins to gasp for air and gets very anxious. He stops walking and still can't breathe properly. What do you do?

**Scenario 3.** A girl develops a really itchy rash on her lower arm. She says she put her hand into her boot and there was a hairy caterpillar in it. Some of its hairs have stuck into her wrist. What do you do?