

Primary Survey (ABCDE)

Systematic first assessment of any seriously injured or unwell patient. Find and fix life threats in order — airway, breathing, circulation, disability, exposure — before anything else. Adapt to local policy and available equipment.

1. PREPARE

- ☐ **Wear gloves and apron; ensure scene/room safety**
- ☐ **Call for help early — assign roles if staff available**
One person leads; others manage airway, IV access, documentation
- ☐ **Ready oxygen, suction, bag-valve-mask, IV cannulas and fluids**
- ☐ **AMPLE history from family/bystanders while assessing**
Allergies, Medications, Past history, Last meal, Events

2. A — AIRWAY (WITH C-SPINE CONTROL)

- ☐ **Talk to the patient — a clear voice means a patent airway**
- ☐ **Look for obstruction: blood, vomit, teeth, tongue, swelling**
- ☐ **Suction visible fluid; jaw thrust if trauma suspected**
Avoid head tilt if cervical spine injury possible
- ☐ **Insert oropharyngeal airway if unconscious with no gag reflex**
Size: incisors to angle of jaw
- ☐ **Maintain manual in-line stabilisation of the neck**

3. B — BREATHING

- ☐ **Count respiratory rate; check SpO₂ if oximeter available**
- ☐ **Expose and inspect the chest: wounds, bruising, asymmetry**
- ☐ **Palpate for tenderness, crepitus, tracheal deviation**
- ☐ **Give high-flow oxygen 10-15 L/min via face mask**
- ☐ **Decompress suspected tension pneumothorax immediately**
Large-bore cannula, 2nd intercostal space, midclavicular line
- ☐ **Seal open chest wounds on three sides**

4. C — CIRCULATION

- ☐ **Control external bleeding with direct pressure**
- ☐ **Check pulse rate/volume, capillary refill, skin temperature**
- ☐ **Insert two large-bore IV cannulas (16-18G) in antecubital fossae**
Take blood for grouping if lab available
- ☐ **Give warmed 0.9% saline bolus 500 mL, reassess**
Children: 10-20 mL/kg
- ☐ **Give tranexamic acid 1 g IV over 10 min if significant bleeding within 3 h**

5. D & E — DISABILITY AND EXPOSURE

- ☐ **Record GCS (eye, verbal, motor) and pupil size/reaction**
- ☐ **Check blood glucose in every patient with altered consciousness**

- ☐ Expose fully to look for hidden injuries — log-roll with spine control
- ☐ Prevent hypothermia: cover with blankets, warm fluids
- ☐ Reassess ABCDE after every intervention and every 5-10 min