

Free Medical Care

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First Aid

All activists must know how to handle a medical emergency, this is how to respond to trauma.

- 1. Assess the situation, is it safe? Will you just become another casualty which someone else will have to rescue? If it is safe activate emergency medical services, call the ambulance.
- 2. Can your patient communicate, what do you see as you approach to tell you what happened to your patient(s)
- 3. Is your patient breathing without difficulty, this is your first priority, a blocked or restricted airway and inability to breathe will kill your patient in a few minutes. If you have a stethoscope keep checking both sides of the chest for good equal lung sounds. If there is a hole in the patients chest skin cover with plastic taped on three sides so it is sealed but will let air trapped inside escape.
- 4. Is your patient's heart pumping, is the patient losing large amounts of blood, you can fix a bleeder by applying direct pressure, move to arterial pressure points, and finally tourniquet using four inch or wider ace bandage, anything narrower will destroy the blood vessels and require amputation. check for hardness in the abdomen, this can mean internal bleeding. If you know how and when indicated you might start a large bore IV in both arms and have fast drip sets and fluid ready to go.
- 5. You should be acting in a way that will not damage the patients spine or cause a disability, but a working airway, effective breathing and intact blood circulation take priority.
- 6. Splint and protect any injuries, if you suspect spinal damage you must immobilize the head neck and spine, duct taping the patients body head and legs to a board will work as well as what the paramedics use.
- 7. Use your own vehicle to go to the hospital or get your patient to an ambulance, serious trauma needs blood transfusion and surgery. Don't drive crazy and obey stop lights, there is no reason for everyone to die in a car wreck on the way to the hospital.
- 8. keep checking your patients awareness, pulse, breathing, and blood pressure you also need to keep checking the pulses and feeling in the hands and feet.
- 9. Head injury patients must be continually re-evaluated for their level of consciousness, equal dilated pupils, and blood pressure. Unconsciousness, unequal pupils or pupils unresponsive to light and increasing blood pressure are all indications of a bleed inside the skull which will begin to force the brainstem out the exit hole in the skull sized for the spinal cord killing your patient. Head injury patients need quick safe transport, a head CT scan, and a neurologist.
- 10. Gunshot wounds where there is no surgical assistance available and the patient is stable still require treatment. Sterile bandaging, a wide spectrum antibiotic, and powerful non-steroidal anti-inflammatory will help manage pain, swelling, and initial infection.

- 11. If a patient is trapped under something, either a limb or their entire body, and has been for over 15 minutes (UK First Aid Guidelines), DO NOT release the pressure, as this can cause Crush Syndrome, in which decayed cells (From the cut-off of circulation) are released back into the blood stream causing renal failure and death. Even if it has been less than 15 minutes and the patient complains of severe numbness, or you notice serious colour change in the wound, call an ambulance. In an emergency, you will need to put a tourniquet on the wound, and treat with dextran 4000 iu.

Before anything else, get First Aid training. Check the local schools or ask at the local Fire Department as to where you can get First Aid training. Many places will give you extensive training at a low cost, if not free.

The Emergency Room

Until we find out what is going to happen with the BigMed changes that Obama has pushed through taking effect in 2011 which includes fines for all those who have no insurance, the emergency room is the first place most folks go that do not have insurance or cash up front.

If you have an injury or illness requiring immediate care, do not let yourself be afraid of the hospital. Unlike a private physician's offices or dentists, the hospital cannot turn you away for emergency treatment because of lack of cash or insurance. They must discharge you in stable condition or if you are not, find long term care if the condition that brought you to the hospital leaves you permanently disabled.

Be honest and upfront about your situation. Do not expect miracles if the condition is not life threatening. Some hospitals do take charity with the appropriate documents, but expect a large bill from most. This can either end up in collection or written off eventually. You do not have to give your real name, but if the condition is serious they will push for your real name to get any old medical records. Thanks to HIPAA, they will not put your real name on your door or even admit you are there if you are concerned about non-pigs finding you if you are admitted and state this concern up front.

Be honest with the staff on any drug you are currently on as drugs can mix in very bad ways. Do not expect an over abundance of pain pills unless you are seriously messed up if you say you are taking addictive illegal drugs.

The ER never talks to the cops except in cases of suspected domestic violence, child abuse, gunshot wounds, you were hauled in the ER by the cops, or they have to call the cops.

Tell them about any allergies or conditions like diabetes as they can inadvertently mess you up if they do not know.

Also, if you want to leave a hospital, they cannot stop you.(unless a doctor believes you would be a danger to yourself or others. For example: suicide) Just tell them you are leaving first. If you are restrained for being violent or being put on a ventilator, they must loosen the restraints every two hours and check on you every 15 minutes. A doctor must also reevaluate you within 24 hours and this is never to be used as punishment. There must also be criteria for restraint removal in writing discussed with either yourself or a family/ friend if you can not make decisions.

Try not to go to the Emergency Room for simple things like fevers under 101 F, minor cuts, non allergic stings, or simple boils. Most often, all they are going to do is make you wait hours, give you a prescription for a med, and give you a sheet telling you you need a private physician.

ER staff hates those who come in acting like jerks, obviously looking for street value drugs, or coming in with things that can be treated at home.

ER cabinets usually only contain bandages, alcohol pads, cotton swabs, etc. The real drugs are stored in two places. It is usually in a computer password activated safe in a watched and video taped room. All drugs are counted once a shift with carefully logged. The more valuable medicine must be witnessed if all of it is not used. The 'quick use' medicine for life saving is usually kept on what they call a 'crash cart'. The carts have breakable plastic seals on them to let it known if they are used and are tracked as well. On top is an AED (the heart shocker you see on medical dramas).

The wasted drugs from old needles, ect. Ends up being squirted in the trash or put in a red bio hazard 'sharps' container. There have been stories of junkie medical staff digging through these, but it is a huge health issue and quite disgusting. Not only are they locked with a small key, it can have all manner of disease as well as some drug. Get help if you feel the need to stoop that low.

The ER typically does not give meals outside of snacks and a drink for folks with low blood sugar. You will need to be admitted to the hospital for this.

Free Clinics

There are some free clinics depending on the area. The only drawback is that many times they only take you if you can prove you have very little or no income. Many also require you have a letter of referral from a social worker or welfare worker. Some are not really free, but are based on income. Be sure to check around to see if one of these in in your area.

Cities usually have free clinics for a variety of special ailments. Tuberculosis Clinics, Venereal Disease Clinics, and Free Shot Clinics (yellow fever, polio, tetanus, etc.) are some of the more common. A directory of these clinics and other free health services the local community provides can be obtained by writing your Chamber of Commerce or local Health Department.

Most universities have clinics connected with their dental, optometry or other specialized medical schools. If not for free, then certainly for very low rates, you can get dental work repaired, eyeglasses fitted and treatment of other specific health needs. This is probably not a good idea for emergencies, though. Wait lists tend to be long, and they only accept new patients certain times of the year. They also tend to take their own sweet time getting around to treatments, and if you cancel even one appointment will drop you from the program.

Free psychiatric treatment and counseling (marriage and individual) can often be gotten at some out-patient clinics and some religious organizations . Actual admission into a mental hospital is a bit harder and a real bummer. Use them as a last resort only. Some cities have a suicide prevention center and if you are desperate and need help, call them. Your best choice in a psychiatric emergency is to go to a large general hospital, find the emergency unit and ask to see the psychiatrist on duty. Expect to be stuck in an emergency room with a large Mental Health Tech orderly standing over you for hours or days until they find a bed for you and a legally binding doctor's order preventing you from leaving even if you change your mind hours later! It is not free, either. The hospital and the behavioral health unit is going to bill you thousands. See Detox and Rehab Programs for a good write up as Psychiatric units are many times lumped in with these places.

Medical Tourism

If you have some cash and need real treatment but do not have insurance or the many thousands needed for a procedure, you may consider getting it out of the country. Do some research, set up your treatments, and take a trip to Mexico, Thailand, or other countries that have made a reputation for cheap, good quality care. Mexico has a

<http://wiki.stealthiswiki.org/wiki/Free-Medical-Care> 3/7 private payment health system designed around cash payment which varies between current US care levels to that of 20-30 years ago. The doctors, dentists, and nurses are caring and professional and the big equipment is quality stuff and may be purchased used from a US or Canadian clinic. Caveat Emptor, buyer beware, research your doctor, clinic, or hospital online before going as there is less regulation in Mexico.

Stretching, Massage, and Exercise

Of course, the most free of all medical care is proper and regular exercise along with stretching! One doctor in a recent book wrote that if there is one thing he wished was in pill form he could prescribe, it would be this. Indeed, most ailments can be prevented through a proper exercise routine and most BigMed prescriptions are sold as bandaids around folks that will not or can not exercise.

Many lower back problems and knee pains can be greatly reduced or eliminated with proper stretching and calisthenics in the morning. Most important in calisthenics is sit=up crunches which build the abdominal muscles supporting the lower back. Hamstring muscle stretches where you slowly touch your toes when standing and calf muscle stretches where assume the lunge position will reduce many back and knee problems. Stretching the trapezius muscles of your upper back and neck by arm cross overs will help with upper back strain.

Try looking for Yoga books in the library. With a little practice, many of the poses stretch out a lot of daily stress. *Reclining Hero* works the fronts of the thighs and *Downward-Facing Dog* is a favorite for the backs of the legs.

Check these pages for what these poses look like:

- Reclining Hero: <http://www.yogajournal.com/poses/790>
- Downward Facing Dog: <http://www.yogajournal.com/poses/491>

While it will not necessarily cure any diseases or injuries, learning the science and art of massage is a good way to keep your friends in good health, especially considering the places we sometimes have to sleep. Olive oil is good massage oil, you can heat it with scented herbs for aromatherapeutic properties then filter and place in a squirt bottle. You will quickly be able to feel the tensed muscle fibers that need to be worked, some people need a hard massage others require a more gentle touch. Practice makes perfect. It is nice to teach the art so you can trade off with your friends.

Old Vitamin Names

You may come across old medical books or even cookbooks that list several Vitamins that you can't find in stores. This is mainly because some vitamins were either reassigned as B Vitamins or proven not to be vitamins at all. Here is a list of the old vitamins and what they're called now:

- Vitamin B4 (Adenine)
- Vitamin B8 (Adenylic acid)
- Vitamin F (Essential fatty acids)
- Vitamin G (Vitamin B12 or Riboflavin)
- Vitamin H (Vitamin B7 or Biotin)
- Vitamin J (Catechol or Flavin)
- Vitamin L1 (Anthranilic acid)
- Vitamin L2 (Adenylthiomethylpentose)
- Vitamin M (Vitamin B9 or Folic acid)
- Vitamin O (Carnitine)
- Vitamin P (Flavonoids)

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- Vitamin PP (Vitamin B3 or Niacin)
- Vitamin U (S-Methylmethionine)

Eyes and Eye Glasses

For many of us, squinting will not help when trying to see. Many of the discount stores will sell non-prescription reading glasses (often called "cheaters"), which are good if one just needs improved vision for reading, but they're not good for seeing from a distance. In a pinch, you can make "pinhole" lenses using stiff cardboard or an index card and punching holes with a pin to see through. There are dealers on-line who offer to sell pinhole glasses (also called "stenopeic" or "aerobic" glasses) that have opaque black "lenses" with dozens of little holes in them. However, they have two major drawbacks; They only work well in bright light and can limit peripheral vision, making them unsafe for such things as driving or operating machinery. Also, the claims that they will make your vision improve are questioned by many in the medical field. They can also make you look like some sort of mad scientist (unless you wear the ones that are made to look like sunglasses).

If you can get an eye exam for your prescription, or know what your prescription is, there are three on-line discount eyeglass dealers:

- <http://www.readingglassesshopper.com>
- <http://www.greateyeglasses.com>
- <http://www.cheapglasses123.com>
- <http://www.cheapprescriptionglasses.net>
- <http://www.readingglasses.com/>
- <http://www.readingglassesexpress.com>

There is also a fraternal organization called the Lion's Club that has chapters empire-wide. This club recycles used eyeglasses and donates them to those that cannot afford to buy them. Getting help from them is up to each individual clubs rules as some only deal with the elderly.

- <http://www.lionsclubs.org/EN/our-work/sight-programs/assistance-requests.php>

The following organizations might help you with eye care either at reduced costs or for free:

- EyeCare America (Public service program of the Foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology)
- 1-800-222-EYES (3937) - <http://eyecareamerica.org/>
- Knights Templar Eye Foundation
- 1-847-490-3838 - <http://www.knightstemplar.org/ktef>
- Mission Cataract USA (Public service program of the Volunteer Eye Surgeons' Association)
- <http://missioncataractusa.org>
- Vision USA (Public service program of the American Optometric Association)
- 1-800-766-4466 - <http://aoa.org/x5607.xml>

Links and Further Reading

You can really take control of your own health care. It is your responsibility to study and research when you have a personal medical disorder. The doctor has only so much time to spend with a patient.

The first step you can take if you've been diagnosed with something is to go to wikipedia and search it. You can learn about psychological and psychiatric disorders with a copy of the DSM-IV TR (latest version as of 2010) which may be purchased or liberated from a bookstore, or possibly torrented as an ebook.

Some tools to help you are the book *Where There is No Doctor* by the Hesperian Society. It uses simple language to explain treatment of most common injuries and disease. *The Merck Manual of Medical Information* is the CorpGov standard reference book for medical treatment and is available in most large book stores and on-line; ask in a doctors office for their last years copy. You will have symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment at your fingertips for most common medical problems. Merck also offers a number of other medical books on-line for free.

The Merck Manual of Medical Information - Home Edition: <http://www.merck.com/mmhe/index.html>

The Merck Manual of Diagnosis and Therapy: <http://www.merck.com/mmpe/index.html>

The Merck Manual of Health & Aging: http://www.merck.com/pubs/mmanual_ha/contents.html

The Merck Manual of Geriatrics: <http://www.merck.com/mkgr/mmg/home.jsp>

The Merck Veterinary Manual: <http://www.merckvetmanual.com/mvm/index.jsp>

Ignorance is no excuse in the eyes of medicine. Download and print these books from the Hesperian Society:

Where There Is No Doctor: http://www.hesperian.org/publications_download.php#wtnnd

Where There Is No Dentist: http://www.hesperian.org/publications_download_dentist.php

Where Women Have No Doctor: http://www.hesperian.org/publications_download.php#wwhnd

A Book For Midwives: http://www.hesperian.org/publications_download.php#midwives

You can buy paperback copies of these books as well. If the main site is down we host a copy at Hacker Labs but it may end up out of date trust the copy at <http://www.hesperian.org> first as they request. Link <http://www.hackerlabs.net/downloads/stw/PDFs/Where%20There%20is%20No%20Doctor.tar.bz2> unzip with 7zip or similar program.

The Borden Institute, an agency of the US Army Medical Department Center & School, keeps a database of Military Medical Textbooks for free download, including such titles as *Emergency War Surgery* and *Military Preventive Medicine: Mobilization and Deployment, Volumes 1 & 2*:

- <http://www.bordeninstitute.army.mil/published.html>

- http://www.bordeninstitute.army.mil/other_pub.html

Most of the equipment and medications can be obtained over the internet. If you want to stock antibiotics and medications the best way to buy them is to find a veterinary supply who will sell you standard human antibiotics and explain them as for use on fish. There is no difference in the meds except you do not need permission from a doctor to treat your illness. Oral antibiotic use is safer compared to intravenous antibiotics with rash and allergy being the most common side affect of the oral antibiotics, contact a doctor and have Benadryl ready if this happens. Yogurt and probiotics are a must if on antibiotics to keep your body from being totally stripped of its microscopic defenders and helpers.

An EMT course which takes about one term is a valuable course to take, yet time in the field as a medical volunteer will teach you even more. You will be better prepared to treat protesters as a medic and you will be much more educated about your own body.

If you prefer more natural care there are plenty of remedies that you can make for yourself with common plants, many practitioners give free classes on natural health care to gain patients.

US Health Resources and Services Administration: <http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/>

Find a government run health clinic that will see you for free or reduced cost.

Unite For Sight Free Clinics: <http://www.uniteforsight.org/freeclinics.php>

Find a free eye care clinic in your area.

Planned Parenthood Locator: <http://www.plannedparenthood.org>

Find a Planned Parenthood Health Center near you.

List of Hotline Numbers: <http://www.coolnurse.com/hotline.htm>

A list of 1-800 numbers that you can call for many situations you may face.

Find a Covenant House (Homeless & runaway youth): <http://www.covenanthouse.org>

A free physical if you decide to check in. You can also call their "Nine Line": 1-800-999-9999

Free Medical Camps <http://www.freemedicalcamps.com>

Information on free medical and dental clinics in the USA.

Check the phone book or at the local library for Dental Schools. Ask if they will allow you to volunteer as a subject in exchange discounted (maybe even free?) dental care. You will have to fill out a legal disclaimer.

Free Condoms

If you live near a university, go to the health services office and ask for some condoms. Also worth noting: many universities have 1-800 numbers (nurse lines) for their students to use to get medical advice. Find the number for the university near you and call it if need be. Also planned parenthood gives out condoms.



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