

## Essential first aid skills

Every year, St John Ambulance broadcast its Big First Aid Lesson live to at least 130,000 schoolchildren to help them learn what to do in a series of common emergency situations.

According to St John Ambulance, **seven out of 10 children say they wouldn't know how to help if someone was hurt** but would like to learn first aid, and Schools Development Officer Joe Willacy believes it's an important skill for every child. 'Primary school children are more than capable of learning first aid skills, and we've heard of a number of young people who have helped in emergency situations, either by administering first aid themselves or by giving others direction on what to do,' he says.

The first step is for your child to **make sure that the situation is safe before they try to help**. 'We want to avoid children putting themselves in danger, so if there are hazards such as broken glass or traffic, we advise them to move to a safe place and call for help, either from a nearby adult or by calling 999,' Joe advises.

### Bleeding

Press firmly on the wound using some clean fabric such as a dressing, a towel or an item of clothing.

1. Raise the injured area so it's higher than the person's heart. This helps reduce the bleeding.
2. Treat the person for shock by making them lie down with their head low and their legs raised.

### Soft tissue injuries (sprains and strains)

1. Look for signs of soft tissue damage such as bruising, swelling and pain.
2. Use the RICE technique: get the person to **rest** the injured area, apply **ice** such as a packet of peas wrapped in a towel, **compress** the injury with a bandage or other padding to keep it comfortable, and **elevate** it to reduce swelling.

### Broken bones

1. Look for the signs of a break: they are a lot more painful than strains or sprains, and there may be an obvious deformity.
2. Immobilise the area – make the person comfortable so they can keep the injured part still. Don't try to move them unless they are in danger.
3. Call 999 for help.