CPR/AED/First Aid Glossary

**Abrasion**: A painful scraping away of skin.

**Abruptio placenta**: Premature separation of the placenta from the wall of the uterus.

**Acute coronary syndrome (ACS)**: A term that can refer to many different heart problems, including heart attack and unstable angina.

**ACLS**: Advanced Cardiac Life Support

**Aerosolization**: Spattering, spraying or otherwise creating droplets in the air or onto surfaces.

**Agonal breathing**: Irregular breathing pattern.

**AIDS**: (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) – A disease related to the exposure to HIV where the immune system is weakened and unable to fight off opportunistic infections due to a low T-cell count.

**Allergen**: An antigen that produces an allergic reaction.

**Allergic rhinitis**: Sneezing, nasal congestion, coughing.

**Allergy**: An overreaction of your body’s immune system to a substance (allergen).

**Amniotic fluid**: Fluid in the amniotic sac in which the fetus grows.

**Amputation**: The loss of a body part.

**Anaphylactic shock**: The most severe result of an allergic reaction, causing swelling in the airways and a sudden drop in blood pressure.

**Aneurysm**: A bulge in a weakened portion of a blood vessel wall.

**Angina pectoris**: Chest pain or discomfort due to inadequate blood flow and oxygen delivery to the heart muscle.

**Antibody**: A substance that your body creates to fight infections, or “foreign invaders,” which is specific to each infection.

**Antigen**: A substance capable of stimulating an immune response.
**Arteriosclerosis**: Thickening and hardening of arterial walls, resulting in a loss of elasticity in the vessels.

**Artery**: A blood vessel that carries blood away from the heart.

**Aspiration**: The entrance of foreign matter into the lungs, possibly leading to infection.

**Asthma**: A more serious condition that causes wheezing and shortness of breath due to narrowing of the airways and increased mucus production.

**Atherosclerosis**: Thickening of the arterial walls due to fatty deposits that cause irregularities in the inner lining of the artery; a form of arteriosclerosis.

**Automated external defibrillator (AED)**: A device that can assess the cardiac rhythm of an unresponsive victim, determine if a defibrillation is needed, and provide an electrical shock if needed.

**AVPU**: An acronym used to describe a patient’s response during an initial assessment: Alert; Verbal; Painful; Unresponsive.

**Avulsion**: A tearing injury in which a piece of skin or other tissue is completely or partially torn from the body.

**Bacteria**: Single-cell microorganisms with well-defined cell walls, which can grow independently on artificial media without the need for other cells.

**Battle’s sign**: Bruising behind the ears, indicating a basilar skull fracture.

**Biological death**: Brain death, or the irreversible death of all brain cells.

**Blood**: Human blood, human blood components, and products made from human blood.

**Bloodborne pathogens**: Pathogenic microorganisms that are present in human blood and can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

**BLS**: Basic Life Support; CPR

**Body Substance Isolation**: A standard of isolation techniques recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. BSI requires the responder to treat every body fluid as if it is infectious.

**Brachial artery**: The primary blood vessel of the upper arm.
**Bronchitis**: Inflammation of the bronchial tubes, with excess mucus production.

**Bronchodilator**: A medication that relaxes bronchial muscles, resulting in expansion of the bronchial airways and improved bronchial airflow.

**BSA**: Body surface area

**C-A-B**: Compression, Airway, Breathing.

**Capillary**: The smallest of the body’s blood vessels, connecting arteries and veins in a network throughout the body.

**Capillary refill test**: A simple assessment that will determine how well blood is flowing from the heart to the extremities.

**Cardiac arrest**: Permanent or reversible cessation of the heartbeat.

**Cardiogenic shock**: Heart-related shock condition.

**Carotid artery**: Either one of the two major arteries supplying blood to the head.

**Carrier**: A person who has the organisms of a disease in his or her blood, even if all symptoms have disappeared. Because the organisms are present in the blood, the disease can be transmitted to others.

**Cerebrospinal fluid**: The fluid in and around the brain and spinal cord.

**Cerebrovascular accident (CVA)**: An injury to the brain caused by a disruption of blood flow to a region of the brain; a stroke.

**CERT**: Community Emergency Response Team

**Cervical spine**: Neck.

**Cholesterol**: A steroid lipid present in body tissues and fluids that may contribute to atherosclerosis.

**Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)**: A group of lung diseases, including chronic bronchitis and emphysema, which limit the flow of air into and out of the lungs.

**Clinical death**: Cardiac arrest

**Concussion**: A bruise to the brain due to a violent jar or blow.
Congestive heart failure (CHF): A condition in which the heart gradually fails in its ability to deliver blood to the tissues of the body. The result is a buildup of fluid in the legs, ankles and feet, and a backup of fluid into the lungs, leading to SOB.

Contaminated: The presence or the reasonably anticipated presence of blood or other potentially infectious materials on an item or surface.

Contaminated laundry: Laundry which has been soiled with blood or other potentially infectious materials or may contain sharps.

Contaminated sharps: Any contaminated object that can penetrate the skin including, but not limited to, needles, scalpels, broken glass, broken capillary tubes, and exposed ends of dental wires.

Contusion: Bruising resulting from a direct blow.

Cornea: The clear, protective single layer of cells over the front surface of the eye.

Corneal abrasion: A scratch on the cornea.

Coronary artery disease (CAD): A condition caused by atherosclerosis, resulting in a reduction of blood flow through the coronary arteries to the heart; coronary heart disease (CHD); atherosclerotic heart disease (ASHD).

CPR: Cardiopulmonary resuscitation

Craniotomy: The surgical opening of the skull in order to access the brain.

Croup: A condition of acute obstruction of the larynx, occurring primarily in infants and children, characterized by a barking cough, stridor, and difficulty breathing.

Decontamination: The use of physical or chemical means to remove, inactivate, or destroy bloodborne pathogens on a surface or item to the point where they are no longer capable of transmitting infectious particles and the surface or item is rendered safe for handling, use, or disposal.

Defibrillation: A controlled electrical shock to the heart intended to stop ventricular fibrillation and restart the heart’s own pacemaker.

Dermis: The layer of skin beneath the epidermis.

Diabetes mellitus: A group of diseases characterized by high levels of blood glucose due to a disorder of metabolism.
**Gestational diabetes**: A type of diabetes that develops only during pregnancy.

**Type 1 diabetes**: Insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (IDDM).

**Type 2 diabetes**: Non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM).

**Diabetic coma**: A condition characterized by severe hyperglycemia; diabetic ketoacidosis; DKA

**Diplopia**: Double vision.

**Disinfect**: Destroying or eliminating a specific species of infectious or other public health microorganism, but not necessarily bacterial spores, in the inanimate environment.

**DOTS**: An acronym used to help focus the head-to-toe assessment of a victim: Deformities; Open injuries; Tenderness; Swelling.

**Ectopic pregnancy**: When a fertilized egg becomes implanted outside the uterus.

**Embolus**: A traveling clot.

**Emphysema**: A condition of the lung characterized by progressive distension and irreversible loss of elasticity of lung tissue, coughing and difficulty breathing.

**E.M.S.**: Emergency Medical Services

**Epidermis**: The outermost layer of skin.

**Epidural hematoma (extradural hemorrhage)**: Bleeding between the dura mater and the inner skull.

**Epilepsy**: A chronic neurological condition that involves recurrent seizures of any type.

**Epinephrine**: A hormone secreted by the adrenal medulla in response to stress; a drug administered to increase blood pressure and cardiac output, constrict blood vessels, and relax smooth muscles in the lungs to ease breathing; adrenaline.

**EpiPen auto-injector**: A disposable drug delivery system that allows a patient to self-administer epinephrine for emergency treatment of a severe allergic reaction.
**Exposure Control Plan:** An organization’s or company’s written plan that details who is at risk for exposure, engineering and work place controls, clean-up and postexposure follow-up.

**Exposure incident:** A specific eye, mouth, other mucous membrane, non-intact skin, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that results from the performance of an employee’s duties.

**FBAO:** Foreign body airway obstruction

**Fibrinolytic therapy:** The administration of “clot-busting” medication to the victim of a heart attack or stroke to reduce or eliminate the clot at the source.

**Flail chest:** Two or more broken ribs in at least two places.

**Fracture:** A break in a bone produced by excessive strain or force on the bone.

**Frostbite:** The freezing and damaging of body tissues due to prolonged exposure to cold.

**Germ:** Any microscopic organism that can cause disease, such as viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi.

**Glucose:** Sugar.

**Good Samaritan Law:** A law in most states designed to protect rescuers from fear of lawsuit when they respond in an emergency.

**HBV:** (hepatitis B virus) – The virus that causes hepatitis B. A serious disease that attacks the liver. HBV is a bloodborne pathogen.

**HCV:** (hepatitis C virus) – The virus that causes hepatitis C. A serious disease that attacks the liver. HCV is a bloodborne pathogen.

**Head tilt/chin lift:** The preferred method to open an airway.

**Heat cramps:** Painful muscle spasms that usually occur during intense exercise in a hot environment.

**Heat exhaustion:** A condition caused by physical exertion in a hot environment that can produce signs and symptoms similar to those of shock.

**Heat stroke:** A potentially life-threatening condition that results from excessive exposure to heat, and is characterized by a cessation of sweating, extremely high body temperature, and collapse.
**Hematoma**: A collection of clotted blood that forms in an organ, tissue or body space, usually as a result of hemorrhage.

**Histamine**: A chemical released by the body that causes allergic symptoms.

**HIV**: (human immunodeficiency virus) – The virus that causes AIDS. HIV is a bloodborne pathogen.

**Hyperglycemia**: Excessively high blood glucose level.

**Hypertension**: Abnormally high blood pressure.

**Hypoglycemia**: Excessively low blood glucose level.

**Hypotension**: Abnormally low blood pressure.

**Hypothermia**: Excessively low core body temperature (95F or below).

**Hypovolemic shock**: Fluid or blood loss of at least 1/5th of the normal blood volume, resulting in shock condition.

**Impaled object**: Foreign body penetration.

**Incision**: A clean break of the skin usually made with a sharp object (e.g. sharp knife).

**Infection**: The invasion and multiplication of microorganisms in or on body tissue that produce signs and symptoms along with an immunologic response.

**Inhaler**: A medical device used to administer medication into the lungs, usually for the treatment of asthma.

**Insulin shock**: A condition characterized by severe hypoglycemia, resulting in a loss of consciousness, seizures and even death.

**Jaundice**: Yellowing of the skin and whites of the eyes (sclera) due to deposition of bile pigment.

**Jaw thrust**: A method to open the airway; no longer taught to lay providers because it is too difficult to learn and perform correctly.

**Ketoacidosis**: See diabetic coma.

**Ketones**: Acids that are by-products of fat metabolism.
**Laceration**: A wound that is torn rather than cut. The wound is usually made by a dull or blunt object (e.g. dull knife, machinery accident, piece of glass), so the wound edges may be irregular.

**Lethargy**: Abnormal drowsiness.

**Ligament**: A band of tough, fibrous connective tissue that connects bone to bone.

**Log roll**: A method to turn a victim without twisting the spine.

**Lumbar**: The lower back.

**Mechanism of injury**: The forces that cause an injury.

**Mucous membrane**: Membrane lining passages and cavities communicating with the air, such as eyes, nose, mouth or genitalia.

**Myocardial infarction (MI)**: A heart attack; death of heart muscle.

**Nebulizer**: A device used to administer medication in the form of a mist to treat respiratory conditions.

**Neurogenic shock**: Nervous system injury that causes vasodilation and pooling of blood, with subsequent decrease in blood pressure, resulting in shock condition.

**Nitroglycerin**: A potent vasodilator that dilates the coronary arteries.

**Obesity**: Excessive body fat to the extent that it may impair health.

**Occiput**: The back part of the head.

**Occupational exposure**: Reasonably anticipated skin, eye, mucous membrane, or parenteral contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials that may result from the performance of an employee’s duties.

**Open pneumothorax**: Trauma that has penetrated the chest wall, resulting in the accumulation of air in the chest cavity, collapse of the lung, and the flow of air through the wound, causing a sucking sound.

**Organization**: For the purpose of this training, the entity, company, group, business, etc. for which you are providing bloodborne pathogens training.

**Orthostatic hypotension**: Postural hypotension; low blood pressure when changing to a more upright position.
OSHA: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Other Potentially Infectious Materials (OPIM): (1) The following human body fluids: semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva, any body fluid that is visibly contaminated with blood, and all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids; (2) Any unfixed tissue or organ (other than intact skin) from a human (living or dead); and (3) HIV-containing cell or tissue cultures, organ cultures, and HIV- or HBV-containing culture medium or other solutions; and blood, organs, or other tissues from experimental animals infected with HIV or HBV.

PALS: Pediatric Advanced Life Support

Paraplegia: Paralysis of the lower half of the body.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Specialized clothing or equipment worn by an employee for protection against a hazard. General work clothes (e.g., uniforms, pants, shirts or blouses) not intended to function as protection against a hazard are not considered to be personal protective equipment.

Pertussis (whooping cough): A highly contagious disease, especially in children, characterized by coughing followed by a “whooping” sound during inspiration.

Placenta: The organ that nourishes the fetus.

Placenta previa: The implantation of the placenta at or near the opening of the cervix.

Plasma: The pale, yellow fluid portion of the blood.

Platelets: Assist in blood clotting.

Pneumonia: An acute infection of the lungs.

Poison: Any substance (solid, liquid or gas) that causes injury or even death when it enters the body.

Poison Control Center: A certified center that provides emergency information on specific poisoning treatment, promotes the reduction of morbidity and mortality from poisonings through education and research, and collects statistics regarding poisonings. Contact your local poison control center by calling 1(800) 222-1222.
Poison exposure: Contact with or ingestion of any substance that can produce toxic effects.

PQRST: A systematic assessment to determine a person’s chief complaint: What Provoked the pain? Quality, Region and Severity of the pain? How much Time has passed?

Primary assessment: Initial assessment of a victim.

Prone: Lying face downward.

Psychogenic shock: A sudden dilation of blood vessels due to extreme emotion, resulting in shock condition.

Puncture wound: Usually a deep wound with minimal bleeding; has the greatest chance of infection.

Quadriplegia: Paralysis of all four limbs.

Rabies: A viral disease found in mammals that is usually transmitted through the bite of a rabid animal.

Raccoon’s eyes: Swelling and bruising under the eyes, indicating a basilar skull fracture.

Radial artery: The artery on the radial (lateral) side of the forearm.

Recovery position: A position for an unconscious, breathing victim that will maintain an open airway.

Red blood cell (RBC): Carries oxygen and gives color to blood.

Regulated waste: Liquid or semi-liquid blood or other potentially infectious materials; contaminated items that would release blood or other potentially infectious materials in a liquid or semi-liquid state if compressed; items that are caked with dried blood or other potentially infectious materials and are capable of releasing these materials during handling; contaminated sharps; and pathological and microbiological wastes containing blood or other potentially infectious materials.

Rescue breathing: The ventilation component of CPR.

Respiration: The process of breathing.

Retractions: Pulling inward of the ribcage.
R.I.C.E.: An acronym for the recommended treatment for sprains, strains and contusions: Rest; Immobilize; Cold; Elevate.

Route of Entry: Mode of transmission; the pathway through which a bloodborne pathogen enters the body, usually a break in the skin or exposure to a mucous membrane.

Rule of 9s: A method to quickly estimate the total body surface area burned in a burn victim.

SAMPLE: An acronym consisting of questions to establish a victim’s medical history: Symptoms; Allergies to medication; Medication; Past history; Last oral intake; Events leading up to the injury/illness.

SCI: Spinal cord injury

Seizure: An abnormal electrical discharge in the brain.

Septic shock: Severe blood stream infection, resulting in shock condition.

Sharps: Any object that can penetrate the skin including, but not limited to, needles, scalpels, broken glass, broken capillary tubes, and exposed ends of dental wires.

SOB: Shortness of breath

Source individual: Any individual, living or dead, whose blood or other potentially infectious materials may be a source of occupational exposure to the employee. Examples include, but are not limited to, hospital and clinic patients; clients in institutions for the developmentally disabled; trauma victims; clients of drug and alcohol treatment facilities; residents of hospices and nursing homes; human remains; and individuals who donate or sell blood or blood components.

Sprain: A stretching or tearing of ligaments or other structures in a joint.


Sterilize: Use of a physical or chemical procedure to destroy all microbial life.

Sternum: Breastbone.

Strain: A stretching or tearing of muscle or tendon; a pulled muscle.
**Standard Precautions:** The isolation precautions used in hospitals. For the best protection, organizations can follow Standard Precautions, which combine the techniques of universal precautions and BSI.

**Stridor:** A hoarse cough like that of a seal.

**Stoma:** A surgically created opening in the body (e.g. a tracheotomy).

**Subdural hematoma:** A collection of blood on the surface of the brain, just below the dura mater.

**Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA):** The unexpected cessation of a heartbeat.

**Supine:** Lying face upward.

**Syncope:** Fainting.

**Synovial fluid:** Fluid contained in joint cavities.

**TBI:** Traumatic brain injury

**T-Cell:** A specialized lymphocyte that coordinates the body’s response to infection.

**Tendon:** A tough cord of fibrous connective tissue that attaches a muscle to a bone.

**Tetanus:** A disease that is contracted when a cut or wound is contaminated with the tetanus bacteria, and is characterized by severe muscle spasms of the jaw; lockjaw.

**Thoracic:** Chest level.

**Thrombus:** A clot; blockage.

**Tidal volume:** The volume of air inspired or expired during a normal respiratory cycle.

**Tinnitus:** Ringing in the ears.

**Trachea:** A tube that extends from the larynx to the bronchi and carries air to the lungs; windpipe.

**Tracheostomy:** A surgical opening through the neck into the trachea.
Transient ischemic attack (TIA): The temporary lack of oxygen to the brain that results in transient stroke symptoms.

Trauma: A serious and life-threatening physical injury caused by an external force or agent and often resulting in secondary complications such as shock, respiratory failure, or death; a wound or injury to living tissue.

Triage: The sorting of patients or victims according to severity of injury in order to maximize the number of survivors when the number injured exceeds the availability of resources.

Tripod position: Upright, rigid posture with arms locked and supporting body weight.

Universal precautions: An approach to infection control. According to the concept of Universal Precautions, all human blood and certain human body fluids are treated as if known to be infectious for HIV, HBV, and other bloodborne pathogens.

Vein: A blood vessel that carries blood towards the heart.

Ventilation: The exchange of air between the lungs and the ambient air.

Ventricular fibrillation: Rapid, uncoordinated contractions or twitching of the ventricles of the heart.

Virus: Sub-cellular infectious organism that can replicate only within living host cells.

Vital signs: Measurements of the body’s vital functions (i.e. temperature, pulse, blood pressure, respirations).

White blood cell (WBC): A cell that attacks foreign bodies and protects against infection.

Xiphoid process: The lower part of the sternum.