FIELD GUIDE · NO. 18

Pressure Bandage

Steady, continuous direct pressure is the first and most effective treatment for most severe bleeding.



FROM THE BOOK

1. Before you provide care, make sure the area is safe and put on disposable gloves if they are available. Locate the source of the bleeding before you treat it.
2. Place a clean dressing or cloth directly over the wound and press firmly, with both hands if necessary. Apply steady, continuous pressure. Do not keep lifting the dressing to check your progress — releasing pressure can disturb a clot that has started to form.
3. If blood soaks through, do not remove the original dressing. Place another dressing on top of it and keep pressing. Adding layers while you maintain pressure is generally better until professional care is available.
4. Call emergency services for life-threatening bleeding. First aid bridges the time until professional care; it does not replace it.
5. Most everyday injuries respond well to direct pressure and a properly applied dressing. After the immediate emergency, keep watching the person's breathing, skin color, and alertness, and be ready to describe what you saw and what care you provided.
6. For smaller cuts, after cleaning and once bleeding has slowed, cover the wound with a clean dressing or an adhesive bandage of the right size. Change dressings when they become wet, dirty, or loose.

PRACTICE IT

Open your first-aid kit, locate dressings, gauze, and gloves, and practice placing a dressing and applying firm, continuous pressure so the motions are familiar. Get certified training for bleeding control when you can.

Educational reference only. Not a substitute for certified first-aid training or professional medical care. In a life-threatening emergency, contact local emergency services as soon as it is safe to do so. Use this information only within the limits of your training.