

What to do if someone's bleeding badly

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(HealthDay)—By knowing how to stop bleeding, you could save the life of a seriously injured person.

Analysis of mass tragedies such as the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012 revealed that many victims could have been saved if bystanders had known how to [control](#) their bleeding, according to Dr. Justin Chandler, a trauma surgeon at Penn State's Hershey Medical Center.

Penn State is part of a national program called "Stop the Bleed" that offers training in how to deal with bleeding in injured people. Similar training efforts already exist for such things as providing [cardiopulmonary resuscitation](#) (CPR) or using an automated external defibrillator (AED) to restore a normal heart rhythm.

"People can bleed to death in less than 3 minutes with very bad injuries," Chandler said in a university news release. "But we can teach you a variety of techniques to control bleeding using virtually nothing."

This could be life-saving in many circumstances, Kimberly Patil, an [injury](#) prevention and outreach coordinator with the adult trauma program at the medical center, said in the news release. For instance, "you might be the first one on the scene to a car crash, a kitchen knife injury, a hunting accident or a traumatic farm injury," she said.

"First, assure your own safety," Patil advised. "You never want to put yourself in danger to help someone else. Then to help you remember what to do next, follow the ABCs of response to a bleeding injury":

- **A for alert.** Call 911.
- **B for bleeding.** Finding the injury that's causing the bleeding.
- **C for compression.** Apply pressure to the site of bleeding, preferably with a clean cloth or wound packing.

Generally, Chandler said, "you want to lock your elbows and push on the area to control the bleeding as best you can." He noted, however, that

this approach is not very effective for chest or abdomen bleeds.

More information: The American Academy of Family Physicians outlines what you should have in your [first aid kit](#).

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