

## Appendix 11 SHOCK

### Fainting

Fainting is the emotional response of some individuals to trivial injuries so that they feel weak and nauseated and may faint. This reaction is not serious and will disappear quickly if the casualty lies down.

#### Diagnosis

Symptoms and signs include:

- Pale, waxy skin which is cold and clammy to the touch;
- Pulse is usually slow at first and then becomes rapid during recovery;
- Unconsciousness lasts only a few minutes, and the casualty recovers rapidly after he lies down.

### Circulatory collapse and shock

Circulatory collapse is a disturbed distribution of blood within the body. Severe circulatory disturbances are called "shock" and result in serious impairment of vital organ functions due to an insufficient supply of blood.

Chemical burns and chemically induced bleeding from the gut may cause circulatory collapse and shock.

There are also a number of chemicals which are toxic to the heart directly and result in reduced pump action of the heart and shock within a few hours; acute kidney failure may result.

#### Diagnosis

Symptoms and signs include:

- Pale, waxy skin which is cold and clammy to the touch;
- Rapid, weak pulse;
- Agitation at first but later the casualty becomes apathetic. Unconsciousness may follow this;
- Large pupils which do not react to light. **LIFE IS IN DANGER;**
- A reduction in the amount of urine passed, if this condition persists for more than one or two hours.

Further advice: **see table 11.**

### Heart failure

Heart failure may occur within a few hours of chemical poisoning or may develop gradually over a period of 24 to 48 hours following exposure to an irritant gas.

It should be remembered that a casualty may already be under treatment for a heart condition.

#### Diagnosis

Symptoms and signs include:

- Weakness, apathy and headache;
- Breathing rapid and shallow;
- Sweating and restlessness with a rapid pulse;
- Blue lips, tongue and ears;
- Swelling of feet and legs;
- Prominent veins in the neck in severe cases;
- A reduction in the amount of urine passed, if this condition persists for more than one or two hours.

Further advice: **see table 11.**