



At St John Ambulance we recognise that first aid remains a crucial skill even as the country deals with the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of you have asked whether you should be doing anything differently in the light of the on-going situation.

We've put together the below advice for first aiders so that you can continue to keep those you care for and yourself safe.

Advice for first aiders

As a first aider, in addition to high quality clinical skills, to be effective you need to;

1. **Be aware of the risks to yourself and others**
2. **Keep yourself safe**
3. **Give early treatment**
4. **Keep yourself informed and updated**
5. **Remember your own needs**

In the current climate with the prevalence of the COVID-19 pandemic, these skills become even more important and here is how you can apply these skills when managing a first aid incident.

1. Be aware of the risks to yourself and others

When approaching a casualty there is always a risk of cross contamination – especially when you may have to get close to the casualty to assess what is wrong or to check their breathing. It is always important to be aware of the risks of how this cross contamination has occurred. According to NHS 111 we do not know exactly how coronavirus spreads from person to person but similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.

2. Keep yourself safe

In line with government advice, make sure you wash your hands or use an alcohol gel, before and after treating a casualty also ensure that you don't cough or sneeze over a casualty when you are treating them.

The Resuscitation Council (UK) provides some useful advice of how to keep yourself safe when providing CPR. [You can read their full advice on their website here.](#)

Don't lose sight of other cross contamination that could occur that isn't related to COVID-19.

- Wear gloves or cover hands when dealing with open wounds
- Cover cuts and grazes on your hands with waterproof dressing.
- Dispose of all waste safely
- Do not touch a wound with your bare hand
- Do not touch any part of a dressing that will come in contact with a wound.



3. [Give early treatment](#)

The vast majority of incidents do not involve you getting close to a casualty where you would come into contact with cough droplets. Sensible precautions will ensure you are able to treat a casualty effectively.



4. [Keep yourself informed and updated](#)

As this is a new disease this is an ever changing situation and the government and NHS are continually updating their advice. Make sure that you regularly review the NHS 111 or Gov.uk website which has a specific section on Coronavirus.

[Click here to visit NHS 111](#)

[Click here to visit Gov.uk](#)

[Click here to visit Resuscitation Council](#)



5. [Remember your own needs](#)

These are challenging and uncertain times for all. The COVID-19 outbreak has meant a lot of upheaval and worry for people. In order to help others you will also need to look after your own needs. Make sure you take time to talk about your fears and concerns with someone you trust and to take out time to look after yourself.

