



SUGAR ADMINISTRATION

All Lifesaving Instructors including First Aid and NL Instructors/Recert Conductors must ensure that all candidates are taught NOT to administer anything by mouth to an unresponsive victim. This includes sugar, candy, oral glucose, etc. to an unresponsive diabetic victim.

BACKGROUND

Many Instructors within the BC & Yukon Branch have taught sugar administration sublingually to an unresponsive victim provided that they are positioned lateral or semi-prone and the airway is continuously monitored. The National position on this issue has always been that nothing is to be administered by mouth to an unresponsive victim and is supported in all published material including the Canadian Lifesaving Manual, the Canadian First Aid Manual, the Alert Manual and the NL and First Aid Award Guides. According to the Medical Advisor for the BC & Yukon Branch, there are 3 areas of concern:

1. Lack of proper assessment of the victim's condition in the first place (determination of hypoglycemia without blood glucose testing - use of a glucometer).
2. Our number one priority has always been to assess and maintain ABCs; putting anything into the mouth of an unresponsive victim jeopardizes this basic resuscitation principle.
3. The risk of aspiration and airway obstruction is increased when administering anything into the mouth of an unresponsive victim who is unable to maintain their own airway (the victim's body may be lateral/semi-prone, but is the airway positioned properly and how is the rescuer monitoring the airway?)

It has always been the position of the Lifesaving Society to train lifesavers and lifeguards to ensure a patent airway for any unresponsive victim. For a victim to self-administer anything orally, they must be responsive and able to maintain their own airway. An unresponsive victim cannot assist in the taking of medication or oral remedies. Placing anything into the mouth of an unresponsive victim that can potentially result in an obstructed airway is not supported by the Lifesaving Society and the Medical Advisor for the BC & Yukon Branch.

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Sugar Administration

REFERENCES

Canadian Lifesaving Manual (2005 CPR Guidelines) – Chapter 8 (pg. 8-18)

Treatment for Diabetic Emergencies (bullet #2)

“Help the victim self-administer sugar, a sugary drink such as fruit juice, or candy such as a chocolate bar.”

Canadian First Aid Manual (2005 CPR Guidelines) – Secondary Emergencies (pg. 46)

Diabetes – victim and incident history:

“If unconscious, place victim in recovery position. If conscious, help victim self-administer prescribed medication or sugar...”

Lifesaving First Aid Award Guide (2005 CPR Guidelines) – Item 32 “Must See” (pg.38)

“Glucose (sugar) administered if patient is conscious”

National Lifeguard Award Guide (2005 CPR Guidelines) – Appendix A (pg.59)

Diabetes (Must See)

“Sugar administered if victim is conscious”

Diabetes (Notes)

“Never administer anything by mouth to an unconscious victim”

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