

Spinal injury



**In a medical emergency,
call Triple Zero (000) for
an ambulance.**

Warning

Take extreme care at all times to maintain alignment of the head, neck and spine.

If the patient is unconscious as a result of a head injury, always suspect a spinal injury.

Signs & symptoms

- pain at or below site of injury
- loss of sensation, or abnormal sensation such as tingling in hands or feet
- loss of movement or impaired movement below site of injury.

What to do

Unconscious patient

1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Place unconscious patient in recovery position supporting neck and spine in a neutral position at all times to prevent twisting or bending movements.
3. Maintain a clear and open airway.
4. If ambulance is delayed, apply a cervical collar (only if trained to do so), to minimise neck movement.
5. Ensure an ambulance has been called.

Conscious patient

1. Follow DRSABCD.
2. Calm the patient and loosen tight clothing.
3. Do not move the patient unless in danger.
4. Support head, neck and spine in a neutral position at all times to prevent twisting or bending movements.
5. If ambulance is delayed, apply a cervical collar (only if trained to do so), to minimise neck movement.
6. Ensure an ambulance has been called.