

Glossary

abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) a weakening in the wall of the aorta in the abdominal region.

abduction movement away from the midline, or move apart, e.g. fingers.

abrasion scraping injury to the surface of the skin.

abruptio placenta the premature separation of the placenta from the uterine wall.

absence seizure staring seizure.

absorption passage of material through the intestine into the bloodstream.

acidosis an abnormally high level of acidity in the body's fluids and tissues.

acute abdomen abdominal emergency that typically requires surgery.

acute abdominal pain rapid onset of abdominal pain.

acute coronary syndrome symptoms caused by myocardial ischemia, such as angina or myocardial infarction.

acute myocardial infarction (AMI) death to myocardial muscle. Also called heart attack.

acute rapid onset.

adduction to move toward the midline, or bring together, e.g. fingers.

advanced directive written instructions, signed by the patient, specifying the patient's wishes regarding treatment and resuscitative efforts.

aerobic metabolism energy production with oxygen.

afterload the pressure the heart must overcome during ventricular contraction.

agonal respirations dying gasps.

agonist a medication that stimulates a response.

allergen antigen that causes an allergic reaction.

allergic reaction hypersensitive immune response to an allergen.

alveoli air sacs in the lungs that exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide with the pulmonary capillaries.

amniotic sac a fluid-filled membrane in the uterus which contains the fetus.

amputation injury resulting in a completely severed body part.

anaerobic metabolism energy production without oxygen.

anaphylactic shock severe, life threatening allergic reaction. Also called anaphylaxis.

anatomic position standing, facing forward, arms at the sides, palms out.

aneurysm weakening in the wall of an artery.

angina pectoris temporary chest pain occurs when myocardial oxygen demand exceeds supply.

antagonist a medication that inhibits a response.

anterior toward the front. Also known as ventral in humans.

anterograde amnesia unable to remember events prior to the injury.

antibodies produced by body's immune system to defend against an antigen.

antigen foreign substance that stimulates an immune response.

aorta artery that carries blood out of the left heart.

apnea absence of spontaneous breaths.

appendicitis inflammation of the appendix.

appendix pouch connected to the large intestine in the right lower abdominal quadrant.

arterioles small arteries that lead to capillaries.

aspiration material, such as vomit, entering the lungs.

asthma acute bronchoconstriction combined with increased mucus production.

atherosclerosis plaque build-up within a blood vessel.

atrium upper chambers of the heart.

aura a sensation of an impending seizure.

auscultate to listen.

autonomic nervous system (ANS) involuntary component of the peripheral nervous system.

avulsion injury resulting in an area of skin torn loose or hanging by a flap.

bag mask compliance amount of resistance felt during artificial ventilations with the BVM.

battle's sign bruising behind the ears indicating possible basal skull fracture.

beck's Triad triad of signs indicating a possible pericardial tamponade.

bilateral both sides.

biological agents bacteria, virus, or fungus that can be used as a weapon and has the potential to pose a severe threat to public health and safety.

birth canal the vagina and cervix.

blistering agents see vesicants.

blood agent see cyanide.

bloody show passage of the mucus plug from the cervix as it begins to dilate.

blunt trauma trauma that does not penetrate the body.

brachial pulse palpable pulse in the upper arm.

bradycardia slow heart rate.

bradypnea slow respiratory rate.

brain stem found at the base of the brain where it connects to the spinal cord. Includes the mid-brain, pons, and medulla oblongata.

breech birth the presentation of the buttocks as the presenting part in the birth canal.

breech of duty failure to perform an ethical or legally required act established by the standard of care.

bronchitis inflammation of the lungs, either chronic or acute.

bronchoconstriction tightening (constriction) of the airways.

bruise discoloration of the skin caused by damage to underlying blood vessels.

capillaries small, branching vessels that connect arteries and veins. Allows for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

capillary permeability leakage of fluid out of a capillary into surrounding tissue. During anaphylaxis, causes swelling, airway restriction, pulmonary edema.

cardiac tamponade accumulation of fluid in the pericardial sac that compresses the heart.

cardiogenic shock decreased cardiac output due to poor cardiac function or mechanical obstruction.

carotid pulse palpable pulse in the neck.

causation the relationship between cause and effect.

cavitation pressure wave caused by high velocity projectile.

cellular respiration aerobic metabolism.

central nervous system (CNS) the brain and spinal cord.

cerebral contusion bruising of the brain.

cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) fluid that circulates through the central nervous system.

cervix the portion of the uterus that opens into the vagina.

choking agents see pulmonary agents.

cholecystitis inflammation of the gall bladder.

chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) chronic disease processes caused by obstruction of the lower airways.

chronic always present.

clavicle the collarbone.

cleaning removal of visible contaminants from a surface.

closed fracture a fracture where the skin remains intact.

coccyx the tailbone.

cold zone the safe area at a hazardous materials incident.

compartment syndrome injury caused by compression of nerves, blood vessels, and muscle in a closed space within the body.

Compensated shock early shock, during which the body is able to compensate.

complex access patient access that requires tools and/or specialized training.

concussion head injury resulting in temporary alteration of brain function.

conduction direct transfer of heat through contact with a colder structure.

congestive heart failure caused by ineffective ventricular function leading to fluid backup.

constrict narrowing, to make smaller.

continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) technique of assisting ventilations in a patient with respirator distress.

contraindication situations when a certain intervention should not be performed.

contusion a bruise.

convection loss of heat to passing air.

coronary arteries arteries that perfuse the heart muscle.

coup-contrecoup injury brain injury on the opposite side of impact.

cravat see triangular bandage.

crepitus the sound or sensation of bone ends rubbing together.

cricoid pressure see Sellick maneuver.

croup inflammation of the upper airways and trachea.

crowning the appearance of the baby's head in the birth canal.

crush injury open or closed injury caused by tremendous force applied to the body.

cushing's response triad of signs indicating increased intracranial pressure; hypertension, bradycardia, altered respiratory pattern.

cyanide a chemical compound that can be weaponized and interferes with the body's ability to deliver oxygen to the cells. Also known as a blood agent.

cyanosis bluish color to the skin, lips, mouth, or nail beds indicating a lack of oxygen.

deceleration slowing down of an object in motion.

decompensated shock late shock, during which the body is no longer able to compensate and blood pressure begins to fall.

decomposition physical decay of the body's components.

decontamination removal or neutralization of hazardous material.

dehydration the loss of enough body fluid to threaten homeostasis.

dependent edema fluid build-up in area of the body closest to the ground.

dependent lividity the settling of blood within the body

dermis the lower layer of the skin beneath the epidermis.

diabetes mellitus a disease process in which the body is unable to metabolize glucose normally.

diabetic ketoacidosis (DKA) a diabetic emergency caused by severe hyperglycemia and acidosis.

dialysis a procedure that assists the kidneys in removal of toxins from the blood.

diaphragm primary muscle of respiration that separates the chest and abdominal cavities.

diastole pressure exerted against the walls of the arteries in between contractions of the left ventricle. Also the phase of cardiac contraction when the heart fills with blood.

diffusion movement from area of high to low concentration.

dilate widening, to make bigger.

disinfection use of chemicals to destroy pathogens.

dislocation movement of a bone out of the joint.

distal away from the point of attachment.

distributive shock shock due to poor distribution of blood due to vasodilation.

diverticulitis inflammation of small pouches (diverticula) along the wall of the intestine.

do not resuscitate (DNR) see advanced directive.

dorsalis pedis pulse pulse on the anterior portion of the foot.

dose amount of drug that should be administered.

duty to act obligation to respond and provide care.

dyspnea difficulty breathing.

ecchymosis another term for a bruise.

eclampsia pregnancy induced seizures.

ectopic pregnancy a pregnancy that develops outside the uterus.

edema swelling.

embolus an obstruction in a blood vessel.

emergency move patient movement techniques used when patient must be moved out of danger immediately.

emphysema a respiratory disease that leads to destruction of the alveoli.

entrapment when a person is trapped in a confined space.

epidermis the outermost layer of the skin.

epidural hematoma bleeding beneath the skull and above the dura mater.

epiglottis flap that covers the trachea during swallowing.

epilepsy a seizure disorder.

epistaxis a nosebleed.

esophageal varices weakening of the blood vessels lining the esophagus.

esophagus tube that connects the mouth to the stomach.

evaporation loss of heat through evaporation of water from the skin.

evisceration open abdominal injury with internal organs protruding.

exhalation the passive part of breathing.

expressed consent verbal, non-verbal, or written consent accepting medical care.

extension movement that increases the angle of a joint.

external respiration exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide between the alveoli and pulmonary capillaries.

extrication removal of a patient that is trapped.

femur bone of the upper leg.

fetus the unborn infant.

flail chest a life-threatening medical condition that occurs when a segment of the chest wall is fractured and detaches from the rest of the thoracic cage.

flexion movement that decreases the angle of a joint.

flushed reddish skin color.

focal seizure see partial seizure.

focused assessment physical exam which focuses on select areas based on the patient's injury or chief complaint.

foley a urinary catheter that allows the bladder to drain.

foramen magnum the opening in the skull where the brain meets the spinal cord.

fracture a broken bone.

french suction catheter flexible catheter also called a whistle tip.

frostbite injury due to exposure to the cold resulting in frozen tissue.

frostnip a mild injury due to exposure to the cold.

full thickness burn (3°) burn injury through all skin layers.

gag reflex gagging caused by touching the back of the throat.

gallbladder organ that stores bile from the liver.

gastric distention accumulation of excessive air in the stomach.

gastroenteritis inflammation of the stomach and intestines.

generalized seizure full body convulsions.

glucagon a pancreatic hormone that stimulates an increase in blood glucose levels.

glucometer used to measure blood glucose levels.

glucose a simple sugar and the primary fuel source for the body.

grand mal seizure see generalized seizure.

gravida the number of pregnancies a woman has had.

hazardous material solids, liquids, or gases that pose a threat to people, property, or the environment.

heat exhaustion a heat related injury due to heat exposure and dehydration.

heat stroke a life threatening heat emergency caused by the body's loss of ability to regulate body heat.

hematemesis vomiting blood.

hematochezia bloody stool.

hematoma collection of blood under the skin in tissue or body cavity.

hematuria blood in urine.

hemorrhage bleeding.

hemothorax the presence of blood in the pleural cavity.

herniation compression of the brain due to increased intracranial pressure.

homeostasis a state of balance or equilibrium within the body.

hot zone the contaminated area at a hazardous materials incident.

humerus bone of the upper arm.

hyperglycemia high blood glucose level.

hyperglycemic hyperosmolar nonketotic syndrome (HHNS) a diabetic problem similar to DKA, without the acidosis.

hypertension high blood pressure.

hyperventilation excessive rate or volume of ventilation.

hypoglycemia low blood glucose level.

hypoperfusion shock or inadequate tissue perfusion.

hypotension low blood pressure.

hypothermia a systemic cold emergency due to a drop in core body temperature.

hypoventilation ventilations that are too slow or shallow.

hypovolemia low blood volume.

hypovolemic shock shock due to loss of blood or body fluid.

hypoxia inadequate oxygen supply to the body's cells and tissues.

hypoxic drive the backup respiratory drive, measures oxygen levels in the blood.

implied consent assumption of consent from a patient unable to expressly provide it.

incident command system (ICS) a system designed to effectively manage MCIs.

incident commander (IC) a function of incident command; this person is the leader of the MCI that all others report to either directly or indirectly.

incident management system (IMS) see incident management system.

incision a sharp, clean cut.

index of suspicion ability to predict potential injuries based on mechanism of injury.

indications recommended uses for a medication.

infarction death to an area of the body's tissues.

inferior below, or closer to the feet.

inflammation swelling.

informed consent consent to treatment given after all the relevant facts are disclosed.

inhalation the active part of breathing.

insulin shock a diabetic emergency caused by severe hypoglycemia.

insulin a pancreatic hormone that facilitates movement of glucose out of the bloodstream and into the cells.

intercostal between the ribs.

internal respiration gas exchange between the body's cells and the systemic capillaries.

intracerebral hemorrhage bleeding within the brain itself.

intracranial pressure (ICP) the pressure within the skull.

intramuscular within the muscle.

intraventricular shunt a device that allows excess CSF to drain from the ventricles of the brain to reduce intracranial pressure.

involuntary muscle muscle not under conscious (voluntary) control.

irreversible shock stage of shock that is irreversible.

ischemia poor blood supply.

jaundice yellowish skin color.

jaw thrust maneuver manual airway technique used when cervical spine injury is suspected.

joint the point where two bones are joined.

kehr's sign referred pain in the shoulder due to possible abdominal organ injury.

kidney failure inability of the kidneys to regulate fluid level and eliminate waste.

kidney stones solid crystals that form in the kidney.

kidneys organs of the urinary system.

kinematics the study of energy derived from an object in motion.

laceration a jagged cut.

lactic acid a byproduct of anaerobic metabolism.

large intestine digestive organ that terminates with the rectum.

lateral recumbent placing the patient on his or her side.

lateral away from the midline.

ligament connects bone to bone.

limb presentation the presence of an arm or leg as the first presenting part in the birth canal.

liver large organ that helps filter toxins from the body.

local environmental emergency a heat or cold emergency affecting an isolated area of the body.

mandible the lower portion of the jaw.

mass casualty incident (MCI) an incident that taxes local resources, involves a multi-jurisdictional

response, or has the potential to produce multiple casualties.

maxillae the upper portion of the jaw.

mechanism of injury (MOI) how the injury occurred.

meconium the presence of fetal stool in the amniotic fluid.

medial toward the midline.

metered dose inhaler (MDI) device used to deliver aerosolized medication through inhalation.

midline divides the body into left and right sides.

minor consent implied consent for a minor patient.

miosis pupillary constriction.

miscarriage delivery of the fetus prior to the age of viability.

mottled blotched skin coloring.

multiple births a pregnancy with more than one fetus.

multi-system trauma injuries to more than one body system.

myocardial contractility the heart's ability to contract.

myocardial infarction (MI) see acute myocardial infarction.

myocardium the middle muscle layer of the heart.

nasogastric (NG) tube a tube that leads from the nose to the stomach.

nasopharynx upper part of the pharynx behind the nose.

national Incident Management System (NIMS) A national ICS developed by the Dept. of Homeland Security for use with any domestic incident.

nature of illness (NOI) the type of medical emergency.

negligence failure to meet the standard of care.

neonate a newborn.

nerve agents chemical weapons that interfere with the body's transmission of nerve impulses.

nervous system body system made up of central and peripheral nervous system.

neurogenic shock shock due to spinal cord injury.

non urgent move patient movement techniques used when there is no immediate threat to patient and rapid movement is not needed or might be harmful.

nuchal cord an umbilical cord wrapped around the baby's neck.

nuclear radiation radioactive energy with the ability to cause injury and damage DNA molecules.

obstructive shock shock due to mechanical obstruction of the heart.

occiput posterior portion of the skull.

occlusive dressing an air tight dressing.

open fracture a fracture where the skin is broken.

orbit portion of the skull surrounding the eyes.

orogastric (OG) tube a tube that leads from the mouth to the stomach.

oropharynx portion of the pharynx behind the mouth.

pale whitish skin color.

palm method used to estimate extent of burn injury. Palm of patient's hand approximates 1% TBSA.

palpation to touch.

pancreas endocrine gland that produces insulin.

para the number of live births. Multiple births count as one.

paradoxical motion movement in the opposite direction.

paraplegia paralysis of the lower extremities.

parasympathetic nervous system (PSNS) portion of the autonomic nervous system.

parietal pain severe, localized pain.

parietal region upper posterior portion of the skull.

partial seizure seizure due to abnormal electrical activity in a limited area of the brain.

partial thickness burn burn injury into but not through the dermis.

patella the kneecap.

pathophysiology the study of disease.

patient advocacy person who acts in the best interest of the patient.

patient controlled analgesia pump (PCA) a patient controlled device that allows self administration of pain medication.

pelvic binder a splint used to stabilize a pelvic fracture.

pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) inflammation of the female genital tract.

penetrating trauma trauma caused when the body is penetrated by an object.

perfusion circulation of blood.

pericardia tamponade see cardiac tamponade.

peripheral nervous system (PNS) nervous system outside of the brain and spinal cord.

peritoneum membrane lining the abdominal organs and abdominal cavity.

peritonitis inflammation of the peritoneum.

personal protective equipment (PPE) equipment needed to meet the Standard Precautions for a given situation.

pertinent negatives symptoms important to consider, but denied by the patient.

petit mal seizure see absence seizure.

pharynx the upper portion of the airway behind the mouth and nose.

placard diamond shaped sign that identifies hazardous cargo.

placenta previa when the placenta partially or completely covers the cervix.

placenta the organ attached to the uterus that provides oxygen and nourishment to the fetus.

plasma the fluid part of blood.

platelets component of blood essential for clotting.

pleura paired membranes in the thorax.

pleural space the closed space between the two pleural membranes.

pneumonia a lung infection.

pneumothorax compression of the lung due to accumulation of air in the space surrounding the lung.

polydipsia excessive thirst.

polyphagia excessive hunger.

polyuria excessive urination.

posterior toward the back.

postictal a state of altered level of consciousness following a seizure.

postpartum after delivery of the baby and placenta.

power grip grip with palms up and all fingers wrapped around object during lifting.

power lift lifting with object close to body, back locked, legs bent, and power grip.

preeclampsia see pregnancy induced hypertension.

pregnancy induced hypertension (PIH) a condition in the later stages of pregnancy with numerous signs and symptoms.

preload the pre-contraction pressure based on the amount of blood coming back to the heart.

priapism involuntary penile erection.

primary assessment component of assessment used to identify and treat immediately life threatening conditions.

primary blast injuries injuries caused by the shock wave of the blast.

primary respiratory drive based on carbon dioxide levels.

primary triage initial triage used to quickly categorize patients into one of four categories.

proximal close to, or near the point of attachment.

proximate cause see causation.

psychogenic shock syncope due to sudden, temporary vasodilation.

public information officer (PIO) a function of incident command that communicates with the public and press.

pulmonary agents a chemical weapon that causes respiratory distress and pulmonary edema. Also known as choking agents.

pulmonary artery arteries that carry blood from the right side of the heart to the lungs.

pulmonary contusion bruising of the lungs.

pulmonary edema accumulation of fluid within the lungs.

pulmonary edema fluid in the lungs.

pulmonary veins veins that carry blood from the lungs to the left heart.

pulse oximetry measures the oxygen saturation of hemoglobin.

quadraplegia paralysis of all four extremities.

raccoon's eyes bruising around the eyes indicating possible basal skull fracture.

radial pulse palpable pulse at the wrist.

radiation the transfer of heat to or from the body based on the external environment.

radius lateral bone of the forearm.

rales abnormal lung sound typically caused by fluid in the lungs.

reassessment the assessment phase where assessments, interventions, and vitals are reassessed.

recovery position placing patient on his side to protect the airway from aspiration.

red blood cells oxygen carrying component of whole blood.

referred pain pain that occurs somewhere other than its point of origin.

respiration the movement of oxygen and carbon dioxide in and out of the lungs

respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) a respiratory infection common in children.

retrograde amnesia unable to remember events following the injury.

rigor mortis stiffening of the body after death

rule of nines used to estimate extent of burn injury. Each body part assigned a percentage.

safety officer a function of incident command that monitors the safety of operations. The safety officer can independently halt an operation if it is deemed unsafe.

scapula shoulder blade.

scene size up component of assessment that begins upon dispatch and does not end until the call is over and patient care is transferred.

secondary assessment assessment component that includes a systematic head-to-toe assessment or focused assessment.

secondary blast injuries injuries caused by shrapnel or other projectiles.

secondary triage the re-triaging of patients in the treatment area to confirm the patient's priority of treatment and assess for changes.

seesaw breathing opposing movement of the chest and abdomen.

seizure abnormal electrical activity in the brain.

sellick maneuver mechanical pressure applied to the cricoid cartilage.

sensitization sensitivity to a substance that did not previously cause an allergic response.

septic shock shock due to infection.

shipping papers identifies the type and quantity of hazardous cargo.

shock inadequate tissue perfusion. Also called hypoperfusion.

side effects any effects a medication has other than what was desired.

simple access patient access that does not require tools, specialized training, or breaking of glass.

single command system a command system where one person is in charge.

skeletal muscle muscles typically under voluntary control.

small intestine part of the gastrointestinal tract between the stomach and large intestine

small volume nebulizer (SVN) a device used to aerosolize respiratory medications for inhalation.

smooth muscle involuntary muscle.

somatic nervous system voluntary portion of the peripheral nervous system

span of control the number of workers a single supervisor oversees. Should not exceed 7:1 on a MCI.

spinal cord component of the central nervous system.

sprain injury to a ligament, typically in a joint.

standard Precautions infection control guidelines designed to prevent disease transmission.

status epilepticus a prolonged seizure, or rapidly recurring seizures.

sterilization removal of microbial contaminants.

sternum breastbone.

stoma opening in the neck into the trachea.

strain injury to a muscle or tendon.

stridor a high-pitched sound in the upper airway indicating partial airway obstruction.

stroke scale as assessment tool used to help identify the presence of a possible stroke.

stroke a lack of blood flow to the brain causing permanent damage to the brain cells.

subarachnoid hemorrhage bleeding within the subarachnoid space.

subcutaneous tissue body fat.

subdural hematoma bleeding beneath the dura mater and above the brain.

sucking chest wound an open chest wound that draws air during inhalation.

suction catheter hollow device connected to suction unit to help remove secretions from the airway.

superficial burn burn injury involving epidermal layer only.

superior higher than, or toward the head.

supine hypotensive syndrome hypotension caused by impaired venous return due to pressure from uterus.

syncope fainting.

systemic environmental emergency a heat or cold emergency affecting the entire body system.

systemic vascular resistance resistance to blood flow in the systemic vessels

systole pressure exerted against the walls of the arteries during contraction of the left ventricle

systolic pressure exerted against the arterial walls during cardiac contraction.

tachycardia fast heart rate.

tachypnea rapid breathing.

tendons connects bone to muscle.

tension pneumothorax progressive accumulation of air in the pleural cavity.

tertiary blast injuries injuries caused when victims are propelled against solid objects.

thermal burn burn due to heat.

thoracic cage the rib cage.

thorax area between the head and the abdomen.

tibia the medial bone of the lower leg.

tidal volume amount of air inhaled or exhaled during normal breathing.

tonsil tip rigid suction catheter, or Yankauer.

total body surface area (TBSA) refers to the patient's skin surface area.

tourniquet a constricting device used to control severe external bleeding from an extremity.

trachea the windpipe.

tracheostomy a surgical opening in the neck into the trachea.

traction gentle pulling along the long axis of a bone.

transverse plane or line divides the body into top and bottom portions.

trench foot a local cold injury caused by prolonged exposure to cold and water.

trending the direction of movement.

triage the sorting of patients to determine their priority for treatment.

triangular bandage a triangular shaped bandage used to support the upper extremity.

type I diabetes insulin dependent diabetes.

type II diabetes non insulin dependent diabetes.

ulcers open wounds along the digestive tract.

ulna medial bone of the forearm.

ureters tubes leading from each kidney to the bladder.

urinary tract infection (UTI) an infection along the urinary tract.

vasodilation widening or enlargement of blood vessels.

vena cava large veins which return blood to the right heart.

ventilation (pulmonary) the mechanical process of breathing.

ventricle lower chambers of the heart.

vertebrae bones of the spinal column.

vesicants a chemical agent that can cause pain and blisters to the skin, eyes, and respiratory tract. Also known as blistering agents.

visceral pain dull, diffuse pain that is difficult to localize.

voluntary muscle muscle under conscious control.

warm zone the area between the cold zone and the hot zone.

weapons of mass destruction (WMD) chemical, biological, radiological/nuclear, explosive or unconventional weapons that have the potential to injure or kill a large number of people.

wheezes high-pitched sound from the lower airway, typically heard on exhalation.

white blood cells component of blood that fights infection.