

## **Chapter 2 The well-being of the EMT**

### **Personal Protection**

#### **Standard Precautions:**

-**Pathogens** The organisms that cause infection, such as viruses and bacteria.

Spread through the air and bodily fluids.

You are most susceptible to blood borne pathogens if you have an exposed open wound or sore.

Airborne pathogens can be absorbed while breathing or through the mucous membranes in your eyes.

Appropriate body substance isolation should be taken for all patients at all times.

-Standard Precautions (**BSI**) is a form of infection control, assuming all body fluids are infectious.

-OSHA Occupation Safety and Health Administration

Under OSHA guidelines employees and employers are responsible for the use -Personal Protective Equipment (**PPE**), to minimize the transmission of diseases.

Any contact such as a needle stick or exposure to a potentially infectious fluid must be documented.

#### **Personal Protective Equipment**

-contamination = exposure to dangerous chemicals, disease or infectious materials, minimize this.

-Gloves, should always be used. Make them available before you contact your patient. Don't wear normal synthetic gloves to clean the ambulance.

#### **Hand Washing**

Even if you properly wear gloves, ... wash you hands.

-Hand washing, wash vigorously with soap and water see figure 2-2A.

If soap and water are not available use an Alcohol-based hand sanitizer 2-2B

#### **Eye and Face Protection**

Wear eye protection to help prevent splashing, spattering, or spraying fluids from contacting your eyes and the sensitive mucous membranes surrounding them.

#### **Masks**

If you may contact blood or fluid splatter, wear a surgical mask.

If you suspect tuberculosis use an N-95 or - HEPA respirator. (Figure 2-3 pg 25.)

#### **Gowns**

Situations like childbirth, patients with multiple trauma or profuse bleeding all indicate a gown.

If you wearing a gown you should also be wearing gloves and eye protection.

Always properly remove and discard/ decontaminate your PPE.

#### **Immunizations**

There are many immunizations to help prevent the contraction of a disease use them.

## **Emotion and Stress**

### **Physiologic Aspects of Stress**

-stress, a state of physical and/or psychological arousal to stimulus.

Any stimulus can be a stressor and stressors vary widely.

Stress is a normal part of life and when managed appropriately doesn't have to pose a threat for EMT.

How you manage these stressors is critical to your survival as an EMS provider.

Stress has three stages : 1. Alarm Reaction 2. Resistance 3. Exhaustion.

### **Types of Stress Reactions**

-critical incident, any situation that triggers a strong emotional response.

### **Acute Stress Reaction**

These reactions are commonly related to catastrophes.

Signs and symptoms are spontaneous and can affect a variety of body functions.

When the stress presents as an acute medical or psychological problem it requires immediate medical intervention.

You're not going to lose your mind if you become stressed after a critical incident.

### **Delayed Stress Reaction**

Also known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

The signs and symptoms may be delayed as much as several years after an event.

It is not uncommon for people to try and rectify their emotions with drugs and alcohol.

This is not recommended and assistance should be sought by a mental health professional.

### **Cumulative Stress Reaction**

This condition results from sustained or recurring stressors better known as -burnout.

At its worst it may present as a physical illness, uncontrollable emotions, fatigue, among others.

### **Causes of Stress**

Some calls have a higher potential for causing stress.

-Mass casualty incident (MCI), a single incident with multiple patients, Calls involving infants and children (SIDS), severe injuries, abuse and neglect, death of a coworker.

### **Signs and Symptoms of Stress**

-Eustress is a positive form of stress and helps people work under pressure .

-Distress is negative, and may cause long-term problems with your health.

Signs and Symptoms: irritability, inability to concentrate, difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, loss of interest in sexual activity, anxiety, guilt, isolation, loss of interest in work.

### **Dealing With Stress**

## **Lifestyle Changes**

Eat healthfully

Exercise

Relax

## **Critical Incident Stress management**

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a comprehensive system that includes education and resources to both prevent stress and to deal with stress appropriately.

Critical incident stress debriefing (CISD) is a process in which a team of trained peer counselors and mental health professionals meet usually within 24 to 72 hrs, to facilitate coping with a critical incident.

## **Understanding Reactions to Death and Dying**

Understanding the various stages a sick or dying patient and their families must overcome will help you deal with the stress.

1. Denial 2. Anger 3. Bargaining 4. Depression 5. Acceptance

Patients do not necessarily go through all of these stages .

To help a dying Patient or family member: Recognize the Patients needs, BE tolerant of angry reactions from the patient or family members, listen empathetically, do not falsely reassure, Offer as much comfort as you realistically can.

## **Scene Safety**

Scene Safety is perhaps the most important concept in your EMT training.

## **Hazardous-Material Incidents**

-Hazardous material incident = the release of a harmful substance into the environment. Many substances are capable of causing death or life-long complications even if they are only briefly contacted.

Maintain a safe distance from the scene of a hazardous material spill.

Your most important roles at the scene of a hazardous-materials incident include taking action for your personal safety, your team, and bystanders.

You will not treat any patients until they have undergone -decontamination or the cleansing of dangerous materials.

## **Terrorist Incidents**

As an EMT you may be called to respond to a terrorist incident, this will be covered more later.

## **Rescue Operations**

It is important that you evaluate every situation carefully and insure adequate assistance arrives early.

Never perform acts you are not trained to perform, secure the scene and stand by for help.

## **Violence**

You may be called to violent or potentially violent scenes, be certain that your scene is safe. You may be advised to stage and wait for a secure scene by dispatch.

### **Plan**

Wear safe clothing, prepare your equipment so its not cumbersome, carry a portable radio, decide of safety roles.

Constantly monitor your surroundings.

### **Observe**

If you observe or suspect danger call the police.

Look for: violence, crime scenes, Alcohol or drug use, weapons, family members, bystanders, perpetrators, Pets.

Don't be afraid or paranoid but ready to recognize and manage dangerous scenes.

### **Reacting to Danger**

Three R's 1. Retreat, 2. Radio. 3. Reevaluate.

When fleeing use distance, cover and concealment.