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The Primary Assessment
Scans

- **Manual Stabilization of the Head and Neck**
- **Primary Assessment – Patient is Apparently Lifeless**
- **Primary Assessment – Patient with a Pulse**
Manual Stabilization of the Head and Neck
(1) When your patient is sitting up, position yourself just behind the patient and hold the patient's head by spreading your fingers over the sides of the head and placing your thumbs behind the ears.
(2) When your patient is supine, kneel behind the patient and spread your fingers and thumbs around the sides of the patient's head to hold it steady.
Primary Assessment – Patient is Apparently Lifeless
(1) Look for signs of life including movement. Scan the chest for signs of breathing. If no signs of life such as breathing (or only gasping breathing) are found, check the pulse.
(2) Check the pulse for no longer than 10 seconds.
(3) If no pulse, begin CPR compressions while the defibrillator is being readied.
(4) Clear the patient. Apply the defibrillator and follow the voice prompts. (Use of the defibrillator will be discussed in depth in Chapter 20, “Cardiac Emergencies.”)
(5) Continue resuscitation. Multiple rescuers can handle multiple assessment tasks simultaneously.
Primary Assessment – Patient with a Pulse
(1) Develop a general impression and obtain a chief complaint. Take spinal precautions if trauma is suspected.
(2) Open the airway.
(3) Suction if necessary.
(4) Insert an oral or nasal airway if required to maintain a patent airway.
(5) Evaluate breathing for rate and depth.
(6) Apply positive pressure ventilation to patients who are not breathing or breathing inadequately.
(7) Provide oxygen based on patient complaint, condition, and pulse oximetry reading.
(8) Identify and control life-threatening bleeding.
(9) Evaluate circulation. Check the pulse.
(10) Evaluate circulation. Check skin color, temperature, and conditions.
(11) Make a status/transport priority decision.
(12) Request ALS or other assistance as necessary.