Fainting

MODULE 5

Fainting

Many conditions can cause someone to faint. While assessing the patient, inquire to the following medical history:

- History of cardiac stroke or seizures
- Any recent GI bleeding or ectopic pregnancy
- History of nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Recent air travel
- In all fainting's, call 911 and Public Safety

If someone is feeling faint, advise them to lie down on their back, if there are no signs of injuries and it does not cause the person any pain, you can raise their legs to help with circulation and improve blood flow to the brain.

Fainting is caused by a temporary reduction in the flow of blood to the brain and can result in a brief loss of consciousness. A person who has fainted should quickly regain consciousness. If they don't, treat them as an unconscious person.

Additional Causes for Fainting

- **Hyperventilation:** Hyperventilation (breathing rapidly) causes a reduction of carbon dioxide in the blood. Hyperventilation may happen if a person is extremely stressed, has anxiety disorders or is in shock.

- **Low blood sugar**. Low blood sugar levels can be caused by several different things such as going without food for a long time (or crash dieting). Also at risk are people with diabetes who take insulin shots or other medication. If they don't eat enough or they take too much medication, their blood sugar levels can drop low enough to make them faint.

- **Being pregnant**. During pregnancy, the body needs more fluid so it's easy for pregnant women to become dehydrated. There are also changes to the body, including hormonal changes and changes in the circulatory system. Also, as the uterus grows it can partially block larger blood vessels and decrease the amount of blood that gets to the brain.

- **Having anemia.** Being anemic means you have fewer red blood cells than normal, and this will decrease the amount of oxygen in the blood supply that is delivered to the brain. A common cause of anemia is iron deficiency.

- **Other physical triggers**. Being in poorly ventilated rooms, exercising in hot weather, allowing yourself to become dehydrated or too hungry are common physical triggers that can cause fainting. Also, standing up too quickly after sitting for a long period or just standing for a long time can make you faint.

- **Emotional stress**. Sudden fright, shock, anxiety, or pain all affect the body's nervous system and can cause a drop in blood pressure, which results in fainting.