

# Motorcycle Accident Victim Checkup

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Flash Gordon - Blood, Sweat & Gears: Ramblings on Motorcycling and Medicine

## One Minute Check

1. **Don't move the victim until they are checked**, save for when their location poses an imminent and unpredictable threat for both the victim and the rescuer. This is to avoid making an injury worse (dirtying an open wound, converting a closed fracture to an open fracture).
2. **Find out what happened**, even if you think you saw the accident. This, besides from telling you what happened, will give you an overall idea of function, consciousness and lucidity. If the victim can speak, the brain, throat, lungs and chest are working, at least for the moment, okay. Take notice of shortness of breath or gasping.
3. **Ask about the neck**. Broken necks tend to get worse, not better, without proper care. If victim feels any pain in neck, assume it is broken until further notice.
4. **Check the neck**. Without moving the head, feel the bumps in the middle of the back of the head. If pushing them gently hurts, assume the neck is broken. Even a little tenderness is suspect. If there is no tenderness at all, victim is awake and reasonably lucid, and has no pain with any kind of position of the neck, it can be reasonably assumed that the victim is safe enough for transport.
5. **Check the head and chest**. Feel the bones in the face. Check if the victim can fully open mouth. Make sure Adams apple is in the middle. In order to check for broken ribs, press in the front of the chest or squeeze the sides of the rib cage during breathing.
6. **Check the abdomen**. Palpate the abdomen, looking for tenderness of unusual tightness (or "guarding"). Squeeze the hipbones together and push down on the public bone, looking for pain. Roll each leg back and forth; bend each knee all the way; twist each ankle; and squeeze along each foot.
7. **Check limbs**. Ask victim to put hands straight out in front of their face, then roll their fists in a circle; touch each of their fingers with the thumb of the same hands; put their hands on their shoulders; and move their elbows in a big circle.

Any pain noted in the steps above warrant attention which may justify medical attention. Any neck, chest, head or belly pain should be checked right away, and contacting an ambulance should be considered. If an arm, leg, hand or foot is broken, get immediate attention. Clean and dress any cuts, and have any more serious injuries checked. If any laceration requires stitches, there is a maximum time of 6 hours to do so before the risk of infection is too great.

**Note:** For any serious injuries, in particular broken bones or spinal injuries, transportation on a motorcycle should NOT be considered a viable option.

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