

LIGHTNING INJURIES



Although people generally think that the chance of being struck by lightning is very low, there are many injuries each year in Canada from lightning strikes.

Some of the injuries caused by a lightning are:

From the electricity

- burns – 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree
- stopped breathing
- stopped heart
- injured nervous system

From being thrown

- head and/or spinal injury
- sprains, strains and fractures

From the light and thunder

- injured cornea and/or retina
- injured optic nerve
- ruptured eardrums
- loss of hearing

Give first aid at the scene of a lightning strike as you would any other emergency scene, keeping the following in mind:

- a person struck by lightning does not hold an electrical charge – you can touch the casualty without fear of electric shock
- the casualty has probably been thrown – suspect a head or spinal injury
- lightning **does** strike the same place twice – assess the risk of another strike and move to a safer location if needed
- if more than one person is injured, the principles of multiple casualty management are reversed; **give first aid to casualties without breathing and/or pulse** since the casualties still breathing are on the road to recovery
- advise all casualties of a lightning strike to seek medical help to ensure a full evaluation of any injuries

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*** Provided as general information only. A physician should always be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions**