



ACFASP Answers Massive Bleeding Definition

Questions to be addressed:

What is the definition of “massive bleeding”?

- a. Interchangeable terms of “bleeding” that compromise life require an objective definition and practical guidance for education. Current actions require a subjective judgment to be made by the person providing initial first aid.
- b. There is a need for clarification of “massive bleeding” for both pediatric and adult patients in the out-of-hospital setting, especially when there will be a delay to definitive care.

Answer:

Based on the limited amount of scientific evidence in civilian pre-hospital care, wound(s) that are actively bleeding that cannot be stopped with direct pressure should be considered “uncontrolled” and potentially life threatening. Conditions that might warrant “uncontrollable” include:

- large wound or large blood vessel involved
- multiple wounds
- wound located on body that can’t have direct pressure placed (i.e., skull fracture)
- multiple patients
- inaccessibility of wound
- battlefield conditions

Use of the algorithm for Bleeding Control should be followed.

Educational and Training Needs for ARC programs:

Consistent use of the terms “uncontrolled” or “uncontrollable” bleeding should replace other terms used to describe life-threatening bleeding in ARC literature.