

Certificate in Integrative Palliative Care – 3
Dr. Geeta Joshi
Dr. Piyush Gupta
Dr. Col. Yashavant Joshi
International Institute of Distance Learning
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur

Week-12
Lecture 92: Recovery Position

(Refer Slide Time: 00:15)



Hello everyone. In this session of first aid we are learning many many important things which you can do with the victim in case of emergencies. We learnt about how to do cuts and dressing, cuts and burns dressing, how to give splint, and now we are going to learn about recovery position.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:55)

PROLOGUE

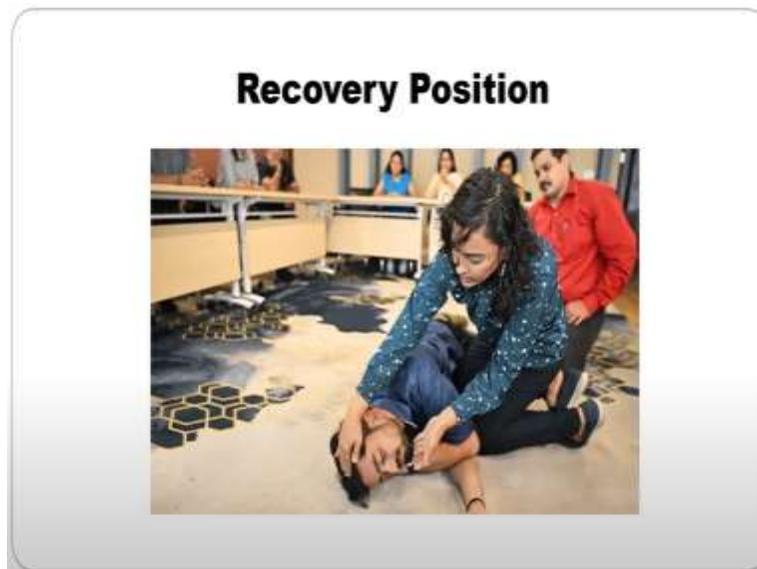
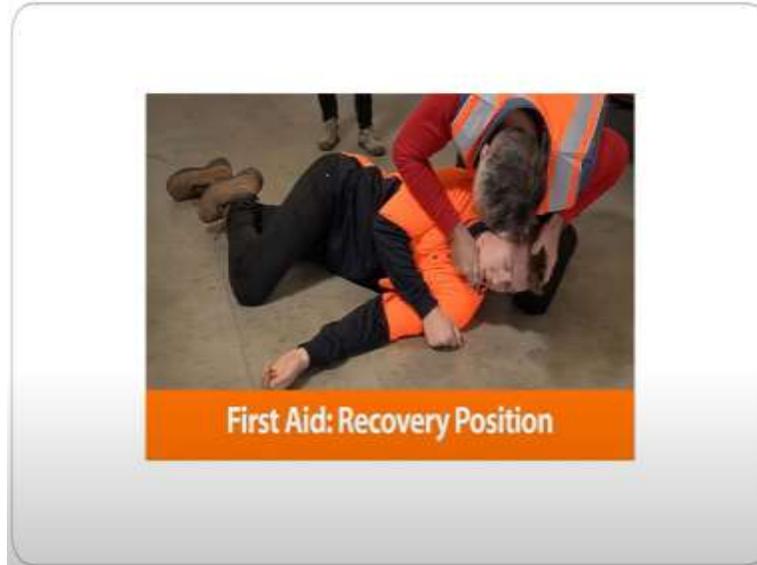
- You never know where you'll be when someone needs first aid. The recovery position is one way bystanders can help until first responders arrive.
- Medical emergencies can happen anywhere at any time. They can result from progressive conditions or random circumstances. When they happen, the first aid knowledge of the people on the scene can make a difference.
- Even if you aren't skilled in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), understanding less intense care techniques like the recovery position can help someone in an unconscious state stay as stable as possible until help arrives.

So you never know where you will be when someone needs first aid. So this emergency situation, injury, accident can happen anytime, anywhere, at home also. So in such situation you will need to learn certain things and one of that is recovery position.

So by giving recovery position a volunteer or a bystander can help until the first responder arrives. Medical emergencies can happen anywhere at any time and they can result from progressive condition or a random circumstances. When they happen, the first aid knowledge of the people on the scene can make a difference. So, if you are a volunteer in such situation who has learned first aid, a formal training of first aid, then you are very helpful and it will make difference.

Even if you are not skilled in CPR, understanding less intense care techniques like the recovery position can help someone in an unconscious state and stay as stable as possible until the help arrives.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:35)



So, usually recovery position is required for the unconscious patient and in this unconscious patient if you are not trained in CPR you may not be able to give CPR. But even by giving recovery position, you will be of great help to this victim and till the other help arrives. This is the recovery position. We will describe in detail in next few slides.

This is again recovery position. In this previous you will see the victim is made to turn on left side, left side of his body. In this victim is help to turn on right side of his body. But both are recovery position.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:10)

What is the recovery position?

- The recovery position has been a staple of first aid for decades. It's the specific positioning of an unconscious or unresponsive person to:
 - Keep Their Airway Open And Draining
 - Lower Their Chance Of Aspiration
 - Reduce Chest Pressure
 - Limit Neck Movement
- Originally, the recovery position was left side only. People thought this would decrease the chance of vomiting.
- Over the years, however, either side has become acceptable.
- The exception to this rule is pregnant people. People must place them on their left side when possible to maintain proper blood flow to the baby.

So what is recovery position. Recovery position has been a staple of first aid for decades. It is a specific position of an unconscious or unresponsive person. Let me tell you the recovery position is most of the time is required for the unconscious person or the person who is not responsive. This has many, many advantages. First of all that will keep the airway open, the breathing part of the body his system will be open and he will be able to breathe properly.

Secondly, if there is any foreign material in the mouth like vomitors or something else, then it will drain out when you turn the victim on the recovery position. Thirdly, it will lower the chances of aspiration. Aspiration means any foreign material like saliva, vomitors in the mouth. If patient becomes unconscious, it is likely to enter into the trachea. That is in breathing pipe.

So by giving recovery position and it is called aspiration by giving recovery position you can prevent this aspiration the everything will drain out instead of going in inside the windpipe. Reduce chest pressure by giving lateral position there there will not be any pressure on the chest and limit the neck moment by fixing the patient on left side or right side his neck is fixed up at rest and it will further limit the neck movement. Originally the recovery position was on left side only they used to insist that victim should be turn on the left side only but people thought this would decrease the chance of vomiting because people thought that by turning on left side there will be less chance of vomiting. Over the year now it has been realized that either side it is acceptable. Whether you turn the victim on left side or right side it is acceptable.

The exception to this rule is pregnant patient, only pregnant patient must be placed on the left side because their uterus can compress on right side on the inferior vena cava that is a big blood vessel and that can obstruct the blood flow to the uterus.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:55)



So that is why pregnant patient always should be, if they are injured or unconscious and if you want to give recovery position they should be turn on the left side to maintain proper blood flow to the uterus and to the baby. See this is the recovery position.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:00)

7 steps of the Recovery Position...

1. Turn their head gently to the left, and check for breathing and a pulse. Check inside their mouth to see if a visible airway obstruction may be removable.
2. Gently extend their left arm away from their body at a right angle, on the floor, with their palm up.
3. Place their right palm down on the ground above their left shoulder. This arm will cushion their face when you turn them.

The Recovery Position
Keep the Airway Clear



Hand supports head
Knee stops body from rolling onto stomach

They will prevent: if you must leave them alone at any point, or if they are unresponsive, put them in this position to keep airway clear and prevent choking.

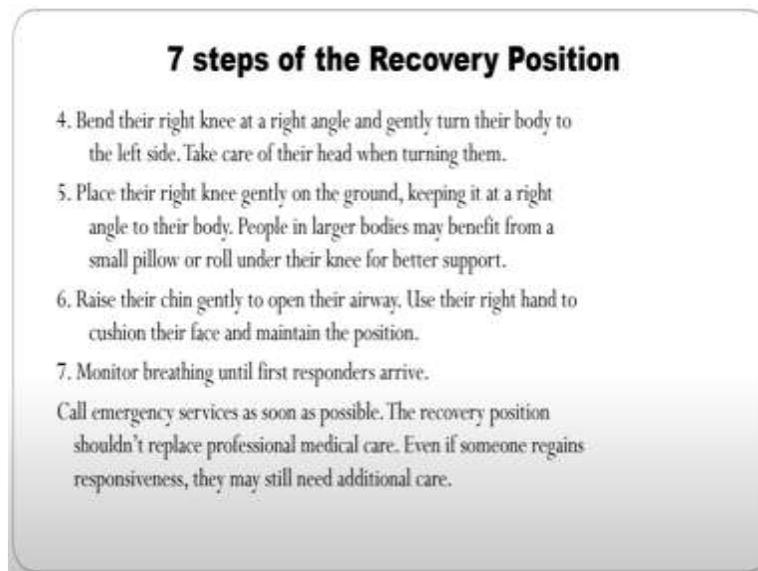
There are seven steps you have to learn about giving recovery position. Turn the head of the victim gently to the left and check for breathing and pulse. When you turn the head on the left check for breathing whether victim is breathing or not.

Check inside their mouth to see if any visible airway obstruction may be removable. Suppose in there, is a mouth, there is some foreign particle or vomit yes you remove that and clean the mouth. Gently extend their left arm away from their body at a right angle on the floor with their palm up. This left arm is extended away from the body and it is put at the right angle to the body and with the palm facing upward, upward. Place their right arm down on the ground above their shoulder left shoulder and this arm will cushion their face when you turn them.

So put the right arm above the left shoulder and push keep it below the head of the victim. So this will cushion the face of the victim so turn the patient on left or right if it is on left side, put the left hand at right angle and palm facing upward. Put the right hand below above the left shoulder below the face and cushion the face with the right hand. Bend their right knee at a right angle and gently turn their body to the left side. Take care of their head when turning them.

So, now bend the right limb, right lower limb or right leg at right angle above the left leg. So, turn it on at right angle and make it comfortable.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:00)



7 steps of the Recovery Position

4. Bend their right knee at a right angle and gently turn their body to the left side. Take care of their head when turning them.
5. Place their right knee gently on the ground, keeping it at a right angle to their body. People in larger bodies may benefit from a small pillow or roll under their knee for better support.
6. Raise their chin gently to open their airway. Use their right hand to cushion their face and maintain the position.
7. Monitor breathing until first responders arrive.

Call emergency services as soon as possible. The recovery position shouldn't replace professional medical care. Even if someone regains responsiveness, they may still need additional care.

Place then right knee gently on ground keeping it at the right angle to their body, people in larger bodies may benefit from a small pillow or roller under their knee for better

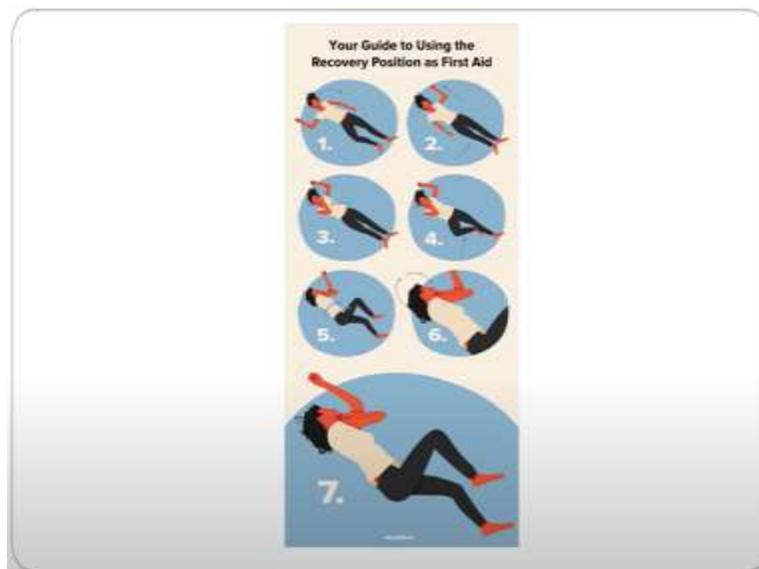
support. You may put a small pillow or roller under this knee to give the support to the right knee. Raise their chin gently to open the airway.

In CPR we learnt extend the face and open the airway by lifting the chin. Here also raise the chin and open the airway. Use their right hand to cushion their face and maintain the position. At the same time keep the right hand under the face and cushion the face. Monitor breathing until first responder arrives.

So, now you check the breathing patient is breathing properly there is a air flow from the nostril or mouth and wait till the responder arrives. Call emergency services as soon as possible because the patient is unconscious, patient is unresponsive. So, here you will need help of a medical professional so call emergency services. The recovery position shouldn't replace professional medical care it doesn't mean that you have put the patient on recovery position. So now he will recover he will be all right it is not so you have to have a help from a medical professional, even if someone regains responsibility they may still need additional care still they should be referred to a doctor or a hospital for further checkup and care.

So these are the seven steps of recovery position which is very easy and you can try to learn on the live volunteer on your friend on your family member and try to give recovery position at home and try to memorize the steps and learn it perfectly.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:05)



See this is how recovery position first of all this is on left side again put the left hand at right angle of the body palm facing upward, then put the right hand on the above the left shoulder and turn the victim on left put the right leg at right angle and cushion the face with the right hand, palm of the right hand. So, this is the recovery position which will the distinct advantages it will open the airway. So, patient will be able to victim will be able to breathe properly. Second, it will drain out the secretion or vomitus from the mouth.

And thirdly, victim will be comfortable and will be able to breathe on his own.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:00)



These are again described recovery position. This is right side, so here the right hand is turned at a right angle to the body, then patient is, you alone also can give recovery position in a unresponsive patient because if you follow the steps properly systematically. So, first of all hand position of the hand then turn the body with left hand and right left leg, then left hand below the face secure giving the support. Turn the left left leg at right angle and support it with the cushion or something below and this is the position.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:55)

Is There a Recovery Position for Babies?

Even babies sometimes have medical emergencies, and their version of the recovery position is a part of infant first aid.

A person wearing a blue uniform is holding a baby in a recovery position. The baby is lying on their left side, with their head tilted back and to the right, and their chin lifted. The person's hands are positioned to support the baby's head and neck.

Is there a recovery position for babies? Yes, sometimes babies are has vomiting or they might have aspirated something put something in the mouth then they need recovery position. And this can become a medical emergency because babies are likely to aspirate this vomitus or some foreign body very immediately you might have seen babies swallowing or aspirating some coin or some safety pin or some small, small items of the hand in the house. And their version of recovery position is part of infant first aid. So if you are learning first aid for the infant and small babies then recovery position for them is also important and one will be learning it. See this is how with two hands this baby is given recovery position slightly tilted on the left side with one hand the chin is moved upward and baby's airway is clear.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:15)

A Recovery Position For Baby

YOU CAN PERFORM IT WITH ONE OR TWO METHODS:

Holding the baby

1. Hold the baby on their side, in your arms, with their head slightly lower than their stomach.
2. Keep the back of your hand under their mouth and nose to monitor breathing (you can wet your hand to increase its sensitivity).
3. Make sure you keep the baby warm with a coat or a blanket.

Not holding the baby

1. Position the baby on their side, using a blanket or another soft option to keep their head slightly lower than their stomach.
2. Monitor their breathing.
3. Keep the baby warm with a coat or a blanket.

You can perform it with one or two methods. First of all holding the baby hold the baby on their side in your arm with their head slightly lower than their stomach. Keep the back of your hand under their mouth and nose to monitor breathing. First of all, like here you can with this hand you can monitor the breathing whether patient is baby is breathing or not. You can wet your hand to increase the its sensitivity.

Make sure you keep the baby warm with a coat or a blanket. So babies are likely to become hypothermic they reduce temperature very immediately because the temperature centers are not well developed or not functioning properly. So always wrap the baby in warm cloth. When you don't want to hold the baby position the baby on their side using a blanket or another soft option to keep their head slightly lower than their stomach and monitor their breathing. Keep the baby warm again with the coat or a blanket.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:30)

When should you use the recovery position?

People typically use the recovery position for conditions of unconsciousness when breathing may be weak, such as:

- Hypothermia
- Fainting
- Diabetic Coma
- Epilepsy/Seizure
- Poisoning
- Asphyxia

- Heart Attack
- Stroke
- Shock
- Those with chronic breathing difficulties or lower back pain may find that the recovery position is also helpful for sleeping comfort.

When you should use the recovery position? people typically use recovery position for conditions of unconsciousness and when the breathing may be weak or when patient is vomited and become semi-conscious or patient has something in mouth and is not able to breathe in this situation recovery position is important. The conditions are hypothermia when the patient is too cold fainting attack in the victim, diabetic coma, epilepsy and seizures, regular patients of epilepsy they are benefited by giving recovery position. In case of poisoning asphyxia asphyxia because of the high altitude or gas leak or something like that or drowning. Then heart attack, stroke, shock, patient is in shock. So, condition in which recovery position is required are hypothermia when patient is too cold, patient has fainting attack, patient is in diabetic coma, regular victims of epilepsy or seizures, in case of poisoning, in case of asphyxia.

That is choking sensation may be because of high and because of less of air available for the breathing in case of gas leakage or high altitude or drowning. Heart attack, stroke, shock and those with chronic breathing difficulties or lower back pain may find that recovery position is also helpful for sleeping comfortably. Patient with lower back pain usually they sleep on recovery position.

(Refer Slide Time: 16:30)

When should you not use the recovery position?

- Experts don't recommend the recovery position - or moving someone at all - if there might be a spinal cord, head, or neck injury.
- As always, there's an exception to this rule. The Indian Red Cross indicates the recovery position may be necessary under these conditions if you can't stay with the person or if their original position causes an airway blockage.
- If you need to move them, stabilize the head, neck, and spine when positioning them on their side.

When should you not use the recovery position? Experts do not recommend the recovery position or moving someone at all if there might be a spinal cord head or neck injury. It is a case of accident or a injury and if, if we are suspecting that patient has injured the spinal cord or head or neck then in this case do not try to move the patient, a victim and do not try to give recovery position.

This will enhance further damage and may worsen the case. As always there is an exception to this rule. The Indian Red Cross Society indicates the recovery position may be necessary under these circumstances, if you can't stay with the person or if their original position causes an airway blockage. But suppose in spite of the spinal cord injury victim has choking sensation not able to breathe properly, in this case you have to give recovery position and if you are going to be away and not going to be with the victim then also recovery position helps to maintain the airway clear and patient victim will be able to breathe properly. If you need to move them stabilize the neck and head and spine when positioning them on their side when you are positioning them you take care of their spine and head and neck.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:05)

How long can someone stay in the recovery position?

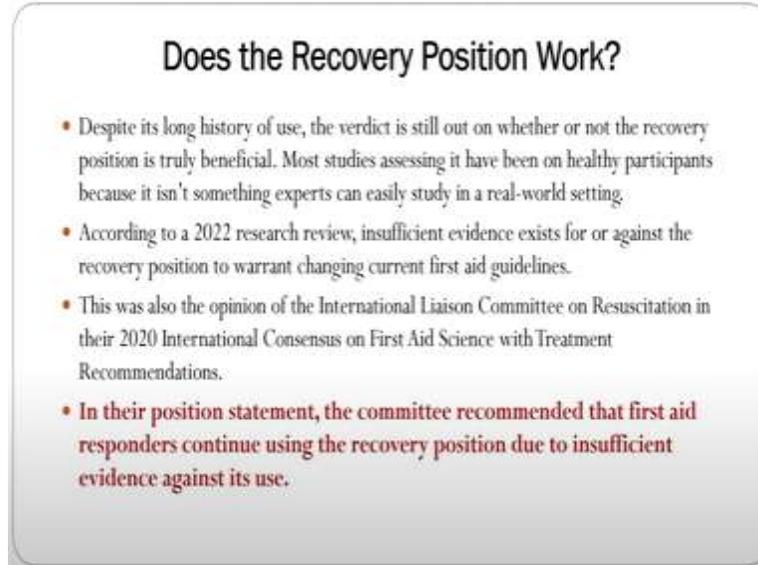
You can keep the person in the recovery position **until emergency services arrive.**

But if the person's injuries allow for it, every 30 minutes, you can roll the individual to their opposite side to relieve pressure on their bottom arm.

How long can someone stay in recovery position. You can keep the person in recovery position until emergency services arrives But if the person's injury allows for it every 30 minute you can roll the individual to their opposite side to relieve pressure on their bottom arm. So, if you have put the victim on left side and the it takes much longer time for medical help to arrive. Then after 30 minutes you can turn the victim on the right side. This will decrease the pressure on the arm which is below your face, face of the victim and which is giving padding effect.

So, to relieve this pressure you can turn again slowly on the opposite side. So, almost about 15-20 minutes, 30 minutes, you can keep the patient in recovery position in one side, then turn over to the other side.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:05)



Does the Recovery Position Work?

- Despite its long history of use, the verdict is still out on whether or not the recovery position is truly beneficial. Most studies assessing it have been on healthy participants because it isn't something experts can easily study in a real-world setting.
- According to a 2022 research review, insufficient evidence exists for or against the recovery position to warrant changing current first aid guidelines.
- This was also the opinion of the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation in their 2020 International Consensus on First Aid Science with Treatment Recommendations.
- **In their position statement, the committee recommended that first aid responders continue using the recovery position due to insufficient evidence against its use.**

Does this simple technique of giving recovery position helps the victim? Despite its long history of use, the verdict is still out on whether or not the recovery position is truly beneficial. Still, there is a controversy. Most studies assessing it have been on healthy participants because it is not something expert can easily study in a real world setting.

Most of the time these studies are done in healthy participant and not on the real victims. That is why you cannot come to the conclusion whether recovery position is helpful, beneficial in emergency situation or not. And according to 2022 research review insufficient evidence exists for or against the recovery position to warrant changing current first aid guidelines. So, still there is no conclusion has arrived and this was also the opinion of the international liaison committee on resuscitation in the 2020 international concession on first aid science with treatment recommendation. In their position statement, this committee has come to the conclusion that first aid responder continue using recovery position due to insufficient evidence against issues.

So, the finally after all this research discussion the concession has been arrived that one should continue using recovery position for the victim in case of emergency situation.

(Refer Slide Time: 20:50)

What are the Concerns About the Recovery Position?

- A small 2017 study suggested the recovery position may get in the way of proper breathing assessment and delay the start of lifesaving CPR.
- In the 2022 research review, the authors agreed this was an important consideration and that it's a good idea to emphasize assessing someone's responsiveness and the possible need for resuscitation before using the recovery position.

What are the concerns about recovery position? A small 2017 study suggests the recovery position may get in the way of proper breathing assessment and delay the start of life-saving CPR. So, usually CPR is given in the supine position and if you continue giving recovery position you cannot start CPR it can delay the CPR. In 2022 research review, the authors agreed this was an important consideration and that it is a good idea to emphasize assessing someone's responsiveness and possible need for resuscitation before using the recovery position. So, before giving recovery position, you first assess whether patient's pulse is there, patient's heart has stopped breathing, then first requirement is CPR.

Cardiac compression followed by breathing, but if patient is not heart is still functioning, patient is only unconscious or semi-conscious then first you give recovery position.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:05)

TAKEAWAY

- The recovery position has existed for a long time, and experts continue teaching it in first aid courses worldwide.
- While there's uncertainty about its true benefits, it's an easy-to-learn tool to have on hand if you need to provide first aid to someone unconscious.

So the takeaway message from this talk is the recovery position has existed for a long time and experts continue teaching it in first aid courses worldwide. Still it has been practiced. While there is uncertainty about its true benefit, it's an easy to learn tool to have on hand if you need to provide first aid to someone unconscious. So, by giving recovery position, you do not need any tools.

You just need your expertise, your two hands and your knowledge. So, when someone is unconscious, not responsive, then it is a part of first aid. First is to give recovery position.

(Refer Slide Time: 22:55)

REFERENCES

Medically
reviewed by Jenneh
Rishe, RN — Written
by Hope Gillette on
March 15, 2023



This is the references taken up for preparation of this lecture. And I think learning recovery position is very very basics and first requirement of any first aid training or of course and one must learn and it will be very very useful in your day to day life. Thank you very much.