

Stop the Bleed

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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It is the number one cause of preventable death: bleeding. According to 2018 stats, each year, about 60,000 Americans die from blood loss. That number is almost two million worldwide.

Stop the Bleed was launched in October of 2015 by the White House, following several mass shootings, including the one at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. Stop the Bleed is a national awareness campaign intended to educate and encourage bystanders to become trained, equipped, and empowered to help in a bleeding emergency before professional help arrives.

While Stop the Bleed started because of a mass casualty event, the reality is most bleeding deaths are the result of everyday occurrences, and that's why it's important for everyone to have training to stop excessive bleeding, including on yourself.

"This is about everyday life. This could be about motor vehicle crashes, this could be about accidents in the home, accidents at work, or accidents on the farm, but it also involves mass shootings and bombings, but we don't necessarily have to go there. This is just simple, everyday life," said Josh Balk, disaster preparedness educator for OSF HealthCare in Peoria, Ill.

Participants start by learning the ABCs of bleeding: Alert, Bleeding (finding the bleeding injury), and Compress (applying pressure to stop the bleeding). This can be by applying pressure directly to the wound, using a tourniquet, or by packing the wound with gauze or some other material and then applying pressure.

The class includes hands-on training in tourniquet application, wound-packing, pressure dressings, and hemostatic agents, which help cause blood to clot.

Educators say they have seen a lot more interest in learning these techniques.

"The goal is for people know how to stop life-threatening bleeding, how do use the basic tools around them, or how to purchase basic simple tools in their life to be able to stop the number one cause of preventable death and that is massive bleeding."

"We have seen an uptick. These life-saving bleeding control kits are more readily available now more than they've ever been in history. We're seeing a lot more people being ready to stop this, having kits available to them, and having the knowledge of how to prevent these injuries or these deaths."

Anyone interested in taking a Stop the Bleed class can visit the [website](#) and search for one in their area. Classes are also offered in central Illinois by the [OSF HealthCare Disaster Preparedness](#) team. A list of free, upcoming classes can be found [here](#).