

# [Methods of Treatment to Be Used for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Dead by Drowning]

**Date:** 1786/03/07

## **Publication Format**

Print

## **Type**

Medicine

## **Symptoms**

drowning

## **Ingredients**

ashes  
embers  
grains  
sand  
water  
tobacco  
brandy  
gin  
rum  
volatile salts  
spirits of hart horn  
hart horn  
feather  
snuff

## **Places**

Halifax  
Nova Scotia  
London  
England

**Source:** Nova Scotia Gazette

**Institution:** Nova Scotia Archives | **Source Origin:** Nova Scotia Newspapers on Microfilm | **Reference:** Microfilm Reels 990, 8162, 8163, 9466

## **Description**

Detailed directions for a number of techniques that might be used to restore an apparent drowning victim, including smoke enemas, mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, the application of hart horn spirits, and throat tickling. Vol. 16, No. 1039. Microfilm Reel 8162. The instructions were appended as "Methods of Treatment" (pp. 83-87) to a collection of epistolary first-hand accounts of drowning recovery published as *Reports of the Humane Society, Instituted in the Year 1774, For the Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned* (London, 1777).

## **Transcription**

*Methods of Treatment to be used for the Recovery of Persons apparently dead by drowning.*

I. IN removing the body to a convenient place, great care should be taken that it be not bruised, nor shaken violently, nor roughly handled, nor carried over any

one's shoulders with the head hanging downwards, nor rolled upon the ground, or over a barrel, nor lifted up by the heels; for experience proves that all these methods are injurious, and often destroys the remains of life. The unfortunate object should be cautiously conveyed in the arms of two or more persons, or in a carriage upon straw, laying as on a bed, with the head a little raised, and kept in as natural and easy a position as possible.

II. The body being well dried with a cloth, should be placed in a bed, or blanket, properly warmed, but not too near a large fire; bottles of hot water should be laid to the bottoms of the feet, in the joints of the knees, and under the arm pits, and a warming pan moderately heated, or hot bricks wrapped in cloths, should be rubbed over the body, and particularly along the back. The natural and kindly warmth of a healthy person laying by the side of the body, particularly by that of a child, has been found in many cases very efficacious. The windows or doors of a room should be left open, and no more people admitted into it than is absolutely necessary, as the life of the person greatly depends upon his having the benefit of a pure air. The shirt or cloaths of an attendant, or the skin of a sheep fresh killed, may also be used with advantage. Should these accidents happen in the neighbourhood or a warm bath, brew-house, bake-house, glass-house, soap manufactory, or any fabrick were warm lees ashes, embers, grains, sand, water, &c. can be easily procured, it would be very proper to place the body in any of these, moderated to a degree of heat, but very little exceeding that of a healthy person.

III. The body being placed in one or other of these advantageous circumstances as speedily as possible, various stimulating means should next be employed; the most efficacious one, blowing with force into the lungs, by applying the mouth to that of the patient, closing at the same time his nostrils with one hand, and gentle the air again, by pressing the chest with the other, imitating the strong breathing of a healthy person; the medium of a handkerchief or cloth may be used to render the operation less indelicate;--throwing the smoke of tobacco up the fundament into the bowels, by means of a pipe or fumigator, such as are used in administering clysters; a pair of bellows may be employed while the other can be procured;--rubbing the belly, chest, back and arms, with a coarse cloth, or dry salt, so as not to rub off the skin, or with a flannel dipt in brandy, rum, or gin;--applying spirits of harthorne, volatile salts, or any other

stimulating substance, to the nostrils, and rubbing them upon the temples very frequently; -- tickling the throat with a feather, so as to excite a propensity to vomit, and the nostrils also with a feather snuff, or any other stimulant so as to provoke sneezing: the body should at intervals be shaken also, and varied in its position.

One or other of these methods should be preserved in until the patient be restored.

We have been as circumstantial as possible in the aforesaid directions, that if one conveniency should be wanting, the attendants may not be at a loss for others. Where the patient has lain but a short time senseless, blowing into the lungs and bowels has been in some cases found sufficient : yet a speedy recovery is not to be expected in general. The above methods are therefore to be continued with spirit for two hours or upwards, although there be not the least symptoms of returning life: the vulgar notion that people will recover in a few minutes or not at all, and the ignorant foolish ridiculing of those who are willing to preserve, as if they were attempting impossibilities, have most certainly caused the deaths of many, who might otherwise have been saved.

Most of the above means are happily of such a nature, that they may be begun immediately, and that by persons who are not acquainted with the medical art; yet it is always adviseable to seek the assistance of some regular practitioners as soon as possible, as it is presumed that such a one will be more skillful and expert, and better able to vary the methods of procedure, as circumstances may require.

The **Society** think it proper to observe, that most of the above means of restoration are applicable to various other cases of apparent deaths, whether from hanging, apoplectic and convulsive fits, cold suffocation by damps or noxious vapour proceeding from coal mines, the confined air of wells, cisterns, caves or the must of summoning liquors.

Whenever any good has been produced by the means recommended, the person who has superintended the cure, is desired to write a circumstantial account of it to *Towers Hosefield*, Esquire, Treasurer, Middle Temple, or *Mr. Wm. Haws*, Secretary to the **Society**, Pelsgrave Place, Strand.

The **Society** pay the rewards within the limits of their institution, in the following manner ;

Four guineas whenever life has been restored.

Two guineas in every unsuccessful attempt, provided the mode of treatment prescribed by the **Society** has been used two hours.

One guinea to publicans, &c. who receive the bodies readily into their house.

## **Annotations**

Society:

The London-based Humane Society for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Drowned founded in 1774.

Methods of Treatment to Be Used for the Recovery of Persons Apparently Dead by Drowning recipe from Early Modern Maritime Recipes: <https://emmr.lib.unb.ca/recipes/130>