

WHEN AN EMERGENCY OCCURS

Take action. Calling 911 is the best thing to do in a life-threatening emergency, even if you cannot speak. 911 operators can identify your location from the call if it is a landline. Do not hang up until instructed to do so by the operator. About 95 percent of Americans live in an area with 911 service, and 96 percent of the country's geographic area is covered. If your community is not covered, find out the telephone number for the local EMS and post it by your phone. Teach children how to call for emergency help without assistance. A PERS unit, Personal Emergency Response System, can be used to contact help when you are unable to dial the phone.

Remain calm. You will be better able to provide critical information to emergency responders and physicians, whether for yourself or someone else.

When To Call

Always get help if someone needs immediate medical treatment. To make this decision, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the person's condition life-threatening?
 - Could the person's condition worsen and become life-threatening on the way to the hospital?
 - Does the person require the skills or equipment of paramedics or emergency medical technicians?
 - Could the distance or traffic conditions cause a delay in getting the person to the hospital?
- If your answer to any of these questions is "yes," or if you are unsure, it's best to get help. Paramedics and EMTs can begin medical treatment at the scene and on the way to the hospital and alert the emergency department of the person's condition en route.

What To Say

When you call for help, speak calmly and clearly. Give your name, address and phone number (in the case of a PERS unit, the operator will have all of this information); give the location of the patient and describe the problem. Don't hang up until the operator or dispatcher tells you to, because he or she may need more information or give you instructions.

While Waiting for Help

Be ready to help while you wait for emergency services to arrive. Action can mean anything from applying direct pressure on a wound, performing CPR or splinting an injury. It may also mean keeping the person calm and telling emergency responders what you know of the person's accident, illness or medical history. Never perform a medical procedure if you're unsure about how to do it.

- Do not move anyone involved in a car accident, injured by a serious fall or found unconscious unless he or she is in immediate danger of further injury.
- Do not give the person anything to eat or drink.
- If the person is bleeding, apply a clean cloth or sterile bandage. If possible, elevate the injury and apply direct pressure on the wound.
- If the person is not breathing or does not have a pulse, begin rescue breathing or CPR. If you do not know how to, or have concerns about performing mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, the AHA has endorsed "hands-only" CPR. This means "pushing hard and fast in the middle of the victim's chest with minimal interruptions" at a rate of 100 compressions per minute. "Stayin' Alive" by the Bee Gees is approximately 100 beats per minute, which is a helpful way to remember how fast to perform compressions. Continue until the ambulance arrives. For more information, visit www.handsonlycpr.org.

What You Should Know In A Medical Emergency

The Signs What To Do What To Say



215-703-6450 or **877-392-6450**

Local

Toll-Free

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EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

EMERGENCY MEDICAL HOTLINE:
911 OR:

POLICE:

FIRE DEPARTMENT:

EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT:

POISON CONTROL:
1-800-222-1222

FAMILY PHYSICIAN:

PEDIATRICIAN:

OTHER REGULAR PHYSICIAN
(CARDIOLOGIST, OB/GYN, ETC.):

Cut this tab and keep in handy spot....

WARNING SIGNS OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

The American College of Emergency Physicians has identified significant warning signs of a medical emergency:

- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- Chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure lasting two minutes or more
- Fainting, sudden dizziness, weakness
- Changes in vision
- Difficulty speaking
- Confusion or changes in mental status, unusual behavior, difficulty waking
- Any sudden or severe pain
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Suicidal or homicidal feelings
- Unusual abdominal pain

These do not represent every kind of sign or symptom that might indicate a medical emergency, so if you think you are having a medical emergency, seek immediate medical care.

Review this list with your physician. Ask whether there are other warning signs to watch for based on your own medical history. In addition, ask when to call the doctor's office versus going straight to an emergency department or calling an ambulance. Find out what you should do when the doctor's office is closed.



CHILDHOOD EMERGENCIES

Because children are still growing, their medical problems can differ from those of adults. They also may display different signs and symptoms from adults when they become injured or sick, and their treatments may differ, too. Seek immediate medical help if your child exhibits any of the following warning signs:

- Any significant change from normal behavior:

- Confusion or delirium
- Decreasing responsiveness or alertness
- Excessive sleepiness
- Irritability
- Seizure
- Strange or withdrawn behavior
- Lethargy



- Severe headache or vomiting, especially following a head injury
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Inability to stand up or unsteady walking
- Unconsciousness
- Abnormal or difficult breathing
- Skin or lips that look blue, purple, gray
- Feeding or eating difficulties
- Increasing or severe, persistent pain
- Fever accompanied by change in behavior (especially with a severe, sudden headache accompanied by mental changes, neck/back stiffness or rashes)
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea

Again, these do not represent every kind of sign or symptom that might indicate a medical emergency, so if you think your child is having a medical emergency, seek immediate medical care.

