

Make the Right Call

When someone is badly injured or suddenly becomes sick, you should know how to call for help. The universal help number in the United States is 9-1-1. It was created to save time when emergencies occur. It is also a number that children can learn easily.

Call 9-1-1 for emergencies only

Call 9-1-1 when you think someone's life is threatened or when someone has a serious illness such as persistent chest pain, difficulty breathing, and collapses or is badly injured.

On the other hand, going to doctor's appointments, getting a scraped knee bandaged or filling a prescription does not require EMS assistance.

Know what information the 9-1-1 operator needs

When you call 9-1-1, tell the emergency dispatcher:

- The address
- Who is hurt or sick
- What happened
- What condition the victim is in and what help is being given

Dispatch may need to ask you several additional questions to get information that will help the responding agency better reach and care for the patient. Answer all of them. Stay calm and speak clearly.

- Do NOT hang up until the dispatcher tells you to. They may need additional information
- After hanging up, do NOT call anyone. Dispatch may need to call you back for additional information.

Know What to Do Until Help Arrives:

- If the emergency operator gives you specific instructions, remember them and carry them out
- Do not move a victim unless they are in danger
- Do try and keep them warm and comfortable
- Make it easy for the ambulance to find you by turning on a porch light or sending someone to meet the ambulance
- Write down some of the following information which will be needed by the ambulance crew:
 - ✓ Patient name, address and phone number
 - ✓ Patient Date of Birth and Social Security number
 - ✓ Patient's doctor's name(s)

- ✓ Any allergies the patient has
- ✓ Insurance (the hospital will ask EMS for this)
- ✓ Date of previous hospital visit (so the hospital can look up old records before EMS arrival)
- ✓ List of patient's medications

If you have a friend or relative who has illnesses, they might want to write this information down and make copies to have on hand. They can hand a copy to EMS when they arrive and this will save time.

If you are not sure if it is an emergency, call 9-1-1. Place this number by each phone in your house and teach your children how to call and when to call 9-1-1.

DIAL

9-1-1