

Hope & Healing

Emergencies Fast Action During Emergencies

A heart at peace gives life to the body — Proverbs 14:30

Introduction

Emergencies require fast action, not panic. This means that you have thought about what to do when an emergency occurs and are prepared. Here is a checklist to help as you review your preparation to cope with emergencies:

- Record the phone number of the nearest emergency facility, poison control center, emergency medical service, sheriff's department or police department and fire station near each of your telephones. Program your phone to make these calls automatically.
- When placing an emergency call you have two options, call 911 and ask that the appropriate help be sent quickly, or call the appropriate facility yourself. The use of 911 makes sense if you must quickly go to attend to something or someone else is summoning the help you need. A 911 call, however, puts an additional step in the process. If you have time you can more quickly call the source of help and give them the information directly rather than have it be delivered through a person who got it from you in the first place.

Otherwise, think about it. An ambulance may be the slowest way to reach a medical facility, not the fastest. It must travel both ways and often is not twice as fast as a person in a car, even with the siren on.

Know the best route to the nearest emergency department. If the person can be moved or can readily move, and a private car is available, have someone call ahead. Then use the car for transportation. The ambulance is expensive and may be needed

somewhere else.

On the other hand, a trained crew of emergency personnel is a great help when you must lift someone to minimize chance of further injury. Or, if you require intravenous fluids, oxygen, a splint, bandages, or life-saving measures on the way to the hospital, call the ambulance. So, someone who is very sick, has a back or head injury, or is severely short of breath, will be better off if transported in an ambulance. The following emergency signs dictate that help should be sought quickly.

Emergency Signs

- **A Major Injury.** Common sense tells us that a broken leg or a chest wound needs attention in an emergency facility.
- **Unconsciousness.** The person who is unconscious needs immediate emergency care. Position them on their side until help comes.
- **Active Bleeding.** Most cuts will stop bleeding if pressure is applied. A wound that continues to bleed in spite of pressure requires attention to prevent further blood loss. Remember, adults can tolerate more blood loss than children. So, apply pressure first, then arrange for further care.
- **Stupor or Drowsiness.** The person in stupor can be aroused but can't tell you what happened. Stupor in children is more difficult to judge than in adults. Both age groups require immediate attention.
- **Disorientation.** A high fever or a variety of illnesses can cause a person to be unable to give you his or her name, the date, or the location. The person who is alert and

then becomes confused as to who they are, where they are or what day it is, requires immediate medical attention.

- **Shortness of Breath.** Shortness of breath after exercise is normal. We may become "breathless with excitement." But, if you become winded after mild exertion or wake up in the night out of breath, or have to sleep propped up on pillows, you need to see your doctor.

A common cause of shortness of breath in an otherwise healthy younger person is the Hyperventilation Syndrome. It almost always is the problem if tingling of the fingers is also present. Persons who hyperventilate are actually breathing too fast but they feel as though they are out of breath.

Person with depression may sigh and complain of difficult breathing. If shortness of breath persists, your doctor needs to be consulted for an evaluation so that the cause and remedy may be found.

- **Severe Pain.** Severe pain always has a cause. Your sense of how severe pain is, is highly individualized. Most often immediate medical attention is given to relieve the pain and then attention is given to the cause.
- **Choking.** If someone at your table in a restaurant suddenly grasps his or

her throat and can't talk and turns blue, do you know what to do? Usually the food causing the choking is steak, peanuts, hard candy, grapes, on orange section, peanut butter, banana, or some other food that can block the passage of air.

Choking is an emergency situation but the people who respond to the usual emergencies are far away, at their work or at home. Someone close by must step forward and relieve the choking or there is a good chance that the person choking will die. If the person can talk that means that enough air is passing to make words.

Usually, relief of choking by the Heimlich Maneuver is not needed in such a case. Otherwise, you will need to do the Heimlich Maneuver.

The Heimlich or Abdominal Thrust Maneuver

For Choking in an Adult:

1. Move to the person's back. Place your arms around him or her. Make a fist and place it against the abdomen, thumb side in, between the navel and breast bone.
2. Overlap your other hand over the fist. Push upward and inward with four quick thrusts.
3. If the person choking is overweight with a large abdomen or is pregnant, move your hands to the middle of the breast bone. Give four quick chest thrusts.
4. A choking person who falls to the floor should be rolled onto his or her back. Place your hands on the stomach and give four quick thrusts.
5. If you are not successful, open the mouth by lifting the jaw and tongue, and look for the swallowed object. Sweep it out with a finger. If you don't see the object, don't poke around, you may only push it in more tightly.
6. If your first attempt doesn't dislodge the object, have someone call for emergency assistance, and repeat the steps until the object is dislodged.

For Choking in a Child:

1. Position the child on his or her back. Kneel next to the child.
2. Position the heel of your hand on the child's abdomen between the navel and the breastbone. Deliver six to ten thrusts inward and toward the upper body.
3. If the object is loosened, remove it with a finger. If the child doesn't breathe after the object is removed, begin mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
4. If you aren't sure about the object, open the mouth and look for it. If you see it, remove it. If you don't see it, have someone call for emergency assistance and repeat the thrusts until the object is dislodged.

For Choking in an Infant:

1. Position the infant on one of your forearms, face down, with the head towards your hand.
2. Deliver four quick blows to the back, between the shoulder blades, with the heel of your hand.
3. If this doesn't work, turn the baby over and, using two fingers give four quick thrusts to the chest, gently.
4. If you're not sure about the object, look for it. If you find it, remove it. If you don't find it, repeat the maneuver and have someone call for emergency assistance. If the object is removed and the infant doesn't begin to breathe, have someone call for help, and begin mouth-to-nose-and-mouth resuscitation.

Summary

Learn more about the basics of first aid before you have to face an emergency. Knowing what to do ahead of time wards off the helplessness and panic that hinders your ability to act quickly.

Awaken the Miracles Within You

The Miracle of Food

God has given us a wonderful variety of food. And, we use our intelligence to choose what is best for us.

When we make intelligent choices, we can prevent and treat health problems ranging from colds to cancer. That's the miracle of food.

Food and physical activity have the distinction of being the only major factors of health that are completely under our control. We have the final say over what does and does not go into our mouths and stomachs. And we have the final say over exercising.

We can't always control the quality of the air we breathe, the noise surrounding us, or the stresses we endure. But we can control what we eat.

It would be a shame to squander such a miracle by eating stupidly.

The recommendations and information in this handout are appropriate in most cases. However, for specific information concerning your personal medical condition, please, consult your doctor.