

Situations That Require Medical Attention Right Away

In the following boxes, you will find lists of common medical emergencies or urgent situations you may encounter as a child care provider. To prepare for such situations

1. Know how to access emergency medical services (EMS) in your area.
2. Know how to reach your poison center—call Poison Help, the national number that connects with the poison center in your region: 1-800-222-1222.
3. Educate staff members about recognition of an emergency. When in doubt, call EMS.
4. Know how to contact each child's parent/legal guardian and have on file consent from the parent/legal guardian to contact the child's primary health care professional in an emergency.
5. Develop plans for dealing with an emergency for children with special health care needs with their family and primary health care professional.
6. Document what happened and what actions were taken. Share this information verbally and in writing with parents/legal guardians.
7. Determine contingency plans for times when there may be power outages, transportation issues, phone communication problems, etc.

Call emergency medical services (EMS) immediately if

- You believe the child's life is at risk or there is a risk of permanent injury.
- The child is acting strangely, much less alert, or much more withdrawn than usual.
- The child has difficulty breathing or is unable to speak.
- The child's skin or lips look blue, purple, or gray.
- The child has rhythmic jerking of arms and legs and loss of consciousness (seizure).
- The child is unconscious.
- The child is less and less responsive.
- The child has any of the following after a head injury: decrease in level of alertness, confusion, headache, vomiting, irritability, difficulty walking.
- The child has increasing or severe pain anywhere.
- The child has a cut or burn that is large or deep or won't stop bleeding.
- The child is vomiting blood.
- The child has a severe stiff neck, headache, and fever.
- The child is significantly dehydrated (eg, sunken eyes, lethargic, not making tears, not urinating).
- Multiple children are affected by injury or serious illness at the same time.
- When in doubt about whether to call EMS, make the call.
- After you have called EMS, call the child's parent/legal guardian.

Some children may have urgent situations that do not necessarily require ambulance transport but still need medical attention without delay. The following box lists some of these situations. The parent/legal guardian should be informed of the following conditions and the need to get prompt medical attention. If you or the parent/legal guardian cannot reach the physician within one hour, the child should be brought to a hospital.

Get medical attention within one hour for

- Fever* in any age child who looks more than mildly ill
- Fever* in a child younger than 2 months (8 weeks)
- A quickly spreading purple or red rash
- A large volume of blood in stools
- A cut that may require stitches
- Any medical condition specifically outlined in a child's care plan requiring parental notification

*Fever is defined as a temperature above 100°F (37.8°C) axillary (in the armpit), above 101°F (38.3°C) orally, or above 102°F (38.9°C) rectally, or as measured by an equivalent method.

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