

Situations that Require Medical Attention Right Away

In the two boxes below, 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. See Glossary for definition of EMS.
- 2) Know how to reach your Poison Center right away, nationally call 1-800-222-1222.
- 3) Educate staff on the recognition of an emergency, and when in doubt, call EMS.
- 4) Know how to contact each child's guardian and primary health care provider. Obtain permission from parents/guardians to speak directly to each child's health care professional.
- 5) Develop plans for children with special medical needs together with their family and primary care provider.
- 6) Compile information on when and how to contact public health authorities.

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- The child is acting strangely, much less alert, or much more withdrawn than usual.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, is having an asthma exacerbation, 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 a 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, or difficulty walking.
- The child has increasing or severe pain anywhere.
- The child has a cut or burn that is large, deep, and/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: sunken eyes, lethargic, not making tears, not urinating.
- Multiple children affected by injury or serious illness at the same time.
- When in doubt, call EMS.
- After you have called EMS, remember to contact the child's legal guardian.

At any time you believe the child's life may be at risk, or you believe there is a risk of permanent injury, seek immediate medical treatment. Do not hesitate, when in doubt, call EMS.

Determine contingency plans for times when there may be power outages, transportation issues etc.

Document what happened and what actions were taken; share verbally and in writing with parents/guardians.

Some children may have urgent situations that do not necessarily require ambulance transport but still need medical attention. The box below lists some of these more common situations. The legal guardian should be informed of the following conditions. If you or the 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 less than two months (eight weeks) of age.
- A quickly spreading purple or red rash.
- A large volume of blood in the 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 101°F (38.3°C) orally, above 102°F (38.9°C) rectally, or 100°F (37.8°C) or higher taken axillary (armpit) or measured by an equivalent method.*

References:

1. Aronson, S. S., ed. 2002. Model child care health policies. 4th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics.