

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY

A medical emergency can be a scary situation, whether it involves a customer or a coworker. A few simple tips can make you better prepared.

WHEN TO CALL

Some folks are afraid to call **911** because they are unsure whether their medical condition or complaint rises to the level of an emergency. Calling a physician for advice is a good place to start, but physicians aren't always readily available and many will end up telling patients to call **911** anyway.

There are specific conditions that should not wait for a call back from the family doctor before calling **911**. These medical conditions are time sensitive -- waiting too long could have serious consequences, even death. Additionally, there are protocols in place to ease the transition from the ambulance to the hospital emergency department. A family physician will probably not have the tools necessary to treat life-threatening events in his or her office.

When experiencing one of the following conditions, call 911 immediately:

Anaphylaxis	Bloody diarrhea
Chest pain (see heart attack)	Coma (unresponsive victim)
Confusion	Dizziness
Drug overdose	Heart attack
Heat stroke	Rectal bleeding
Shortness of breath	Slurred speech
Stroke	Sudden blindness (see stroke)
Uncontrolled bleeding	Uncontrolled nose bleed
Vomiting blood	Weakness
Serious Burns	Bleeding that will not stop
Bleeding with weakness (shock)	Broken bones visible through an open wound
Broken leg	

This is certainly not an exhaustive list. It's important to understand that emergencies are defined by the victim; if you feel you are having a medical emergency, call **911** immediately.

How to Call 911

1. **Stay calm... Stay with the victim if it's not you!** It's important to take a deep breath and not get excited. Any situation that requires **911** is, by definition, an emergency. The **911** dispatcher knows that and will try to move things along quickly, but under control.

2. If the victim is unable to call, the **caller** should be someone with the victim. If you have security, **have someone notify security of the emergency**. They will help route the emergency responders to the appropriate place. **Do not call security first!** This will only delay the response time. Security will not have the necessary information to share with the **911** dispatcher.
3. Start by telling **911** what kind of emergency you have. Be descriptive and give as much information as possible. If a law enforcement center has answered the call, they will need to transfer calls for fires and medical emergencies to the appropriate center. You will hear clicking - **do not hang up!**
4. Wait for the dispatcher to ask questions, and then answer clearly and calmly. Even though many **911** centers have enhanced capabilities - meaning they are able to see your location on the computer screen - they are still required to confirm the information. Bear with this line of questioning; you don't want the ambulance to respond to the wrong location.
5. If you are in danger of assault, the **911** dispatcher will still need you to answer quietly, mostly "yes" and "no" questions.
6. If you reach a recording, listen to what it says. If the recording says your call cannot be completed, hang up and try again. If the recording says all **911** operators are busy, *wait!* When the next **911** dispatcher is available to take the call, it will transfer you.
7. Let **911** guide the conversation. He or she is typing the information into a computer and may seem to be taking forever. There's a good chance, however, that emergency services are already being sent while you are still on the line.
8. In some cases, **911** will give you directions. Listen carefully, follow each step exactly, and *ask for clarification* if you don't understand.
9. Keep your eyes open. You may be asked to describe victims, suspects, vehicles, or other parts of the scene.
10. Do not hang up the call until directed to do so by **911**.

Final Tips:

1. No matter what happens - *Stay Calm*.
2. Take a deep breath.
3. Know where you are.
4. Make sure your emergency contact information is updated. If not, notify HUM with the corrections.