

# When to Seek Emergency Medical Care in Child Care



Many medical emergencies or urgent situations require immediate medical attention by Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Even situations that don't require ambulance transport can require the attention of emergency medical personnel. Child care providers should have a written policy regarding Emergency Procedures. EMS should always be called first, and the parent or guardian called second.

## Prepare Before Emergencies Occur

- Know how to access Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in your area.
- Train staff to recognize emergencies.
- Document the phone number for each child's guardian and primary health care provider.
- Develop plans for children with special medical needs. The plan should be developed with the child's family and physician.
- Do a daily health check on each child.

## Call EMS immediately when...

- 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- The child is acting strangely, much less alert, or much more withdrawn than usual.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 a loss of consciousness (seizure)
- The child is unconscious.
- The child becomes progressively less responsive.
- The child has any of the following after a head injury: decrease in 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.

## Seek Medical Attention within One Hour when...

- A child of any age has a fever and looks more than mildly ill.
- A child less than 2 months (8 weeks) of age has a fever.
- A child develops a quickly spreading purple or red rash.
- A child's stool contains a large amount of blood.
- A child gets a cut that may require stitches.
- A child experiences any medical condition specifically outlined in his or her individualized care plan.

## Talking Points for Parents

- Parents should be involved in developing Emergency Policies and Procedures.
- Parents should sign a consent form authorizing the child to be treated by Emergency Medical Personnel.
- Encourage parents to share information about their child's health issues on a daily basis.

## Resources:

**Managing Infectious Diseases in Child Care and Schools, AAP, 2005**

**American Academy of Pediatrics:** [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) or 800-433-9016

Information consistent with Caring for Our Children, 2012: <http://nrckids.org>