



Responding to Change in Status

BQIS Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual's health and safety and to improving their quality of life.

Intended Outcomes

Individuals will understand how to respond to varying levels of change in status.

Definitions

Potentially Life-threatening Medical Emergency: Anything that could result in death of the person.

Serious Medical Issue: An issue that could result in adverse health or safety for the person if medical care is not obtained promptly.

Minor Medical Issue: An issue that can be handled with minor first aid or written doctor's orders.

Facts

Importance of responding to change in status:

- If you think you need to call someone, *do it!* Do not call to ask someone if you should. If you have any question in your mind, make the call.
- Timeliness can be the difference between life and death.
- Make the call and initiate first aid or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as necessary.

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Always call 911 if an individual:
 - Has bleeding that can't be controlled
 - Is or becomes unconscious (not related to a seizure or if you are unsure if the person is having a seizure)
 - Has no pulse
 - Has trouble breathing or is breathing in a strange way
 - Has chest pain or pressure.



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- Has severe injuries such as broken bones as a result of an accident
- Is choking (not breathing and not coughing)
- Has injuries to the head, neck, or back
- Has gone into shock (pale, blue lips or fingertips, weak and rapid pulse, rapid breathing, low blood pressure (BP), feeling of impending doom, change in consciousness)
- Has a seizure lasting five (5) minutes or has continuous seizures
- Has suffered electrical shock
- Is drowning or near drowning
- Experiences paralysis, numbness, confusion
- Suffers severe burns (burns that cover more than one part of the body or on head, neck, hands, feet, or genitals)
- Has signs of stroke: numbness, slurred speech, or cannot move a body part
- Vomiting blood or continuous vomiting
- Has a rash that appears rapidly and covers large areas.

(Not intended to be an all-inclusive list or to replace person-specific indicators.)

2. If an individual appears to have been poisoned, first call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 to get advice and then call 911.
3. When you call 911:
 - Tell them:
 - Who you are
 - Where you are
 - What has happened
 - When it happened



- Stay on the phone until the dispatcher tells you to hang up.
 - While waiting for emergency medical personnel, stay calm and reassure the individual, stay with him or her, and do necessary first-aid and/or cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
 - If possible, send another person to watch for the ambulance to quickly guide the emergency personnel to the scene.
 - When the emergency personnel arrive, provide them with additional information including current medications, allergies, diagnosis, guardian/health care representative information, insurance information, and the name and phone number of the individual's primary doctor. Send or bring copies of the information with the person if possible.
4. For serious medical issues:
- Call the person's physician as soon as possible for things such as:
 - Rapid change in behavior
 - Increase in challenging behavior such as aggression or self-abuse
 - Sleeping more than usual
 - Unusual fatigue
 - Holding abdomen
 - Dramatic change in facial expression or demeanor
 - Evidence of pain or discomfort
 - New or sudden onset of incontinence of bowel or bladder
 - Onset of fever of 101 degrees or higher
 - Diarrhea or vomiting lasting more than four (4) hours
 - Rash lasting several days or getting worse
 - Increase in seizure frequency, intensity, or duration
 - Occurrence of first seizure or a seizure after extended period of time without seizure



- Onset of limping, change in gait/ambulation, or difficulty in movement
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Infection in injury site
- Swelling

(Not intended to be an all-inclusive list or to replace person-specific indicators.)

5. For minor symptoms or medical issues:

- Address minor scratches, infrequent minor discomfort, and infrequent mild indigestion, etc., with simple First Aid or written doctor's orders.
- Doctor's orders must have specific instructions and listed with PRN (as needed) orders in person's medical record.
- Notify the physician if using a PRN medication repeatedly or find that it is not effective.



Learning Assessment

The following questions can be used to verify a person's competency regarding the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. True or False: If you need to call 911, you may hang up as soon as you relay the nature of the emergency and your location.
2. True or False: Call your supervisor before calling 911.
3. Times when the appropriate action would be to call a person's physician include:
 - A. Bleeding that cannot be controlled
 - B. New onset of no control of bladder
 - C. Difficulty breathing
 - D. Slurred speech

References

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Related Resources

Recognizing Change in Status Fact Sheet

Learning Assessment Answers

1. False
2. False
3. B