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Health and wellness tips for your work, home, and life—brought to you by the insurance and healthcare specialists at Colburn Group.

## Is this an Emergency?

*When you should drive to the hospital vs. calling 9-1-1*

There are many instances that warrant emergency medical care for you or a loved one. In these circumstances, you may need to drive yourself to the local emergency room or call 9-1-1 and be transported there by emergency personnel.

According to the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), the following medical conditions necessitate a trip to the emergency room:

- Difficulty breathing and/or shortness of breath
- Chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure
- Fainting, dizziness or extreme weakness
- Vision changes
- Confusion or changes in one's mental status
- Sudden or severe pains
- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Persistent or severe vomiting or diarrhea

- Vomiting or coughing up blood
- Suicidal feelings and/or attempts
- Speaking difficulties
- Shortness of breath
- Abnormal abdominal pains.

Unlike adults, medical symptoms that arise in children may be extremely serious. In addition, children may find it difficult to articulate their symptoms clearly, thus requiring adults to interpret the severity of their problems. If you suspect that a child needs emergency care, take him/her to the emergency room immediately.

### Being Prepared for the ER

When visiting the hospital's emergency department, it is wise to come prepared to assist the doctors and nurses in treating you or a loved one properly and efficiently. To do so, bring the following:

- A list of medications, which should include:

- How frequently the medications are taken
- How long they have been taken
- A list of allergies, including allergies to food, products, or insects
- A list of immunizations, including tetanus, Hepatitis B, flu shots, etc.

In addition to being prepared, it is necessary for you to remain calm while waiting to be helped at the ER. It is also vital that you alert the medical staff if the condition worsens



while you are waiting.

### Should You Call for Assistance?

Unlike the medical conditions listed previously, there are times when you or a loved one may need emergency care immediately. To receive such care, you should call 9-1-1 versus driving to the closest ER by yourself. The following situations would merit calling 9-1-1:

- The condition appears to be life-threatening.
- The condition could become life-threatening or could worsen significantly on the way to the hospital.
- Moving the injured person could cause serious injury.
- The injured or ill person requires the equipment and knowledge of emergency medical technicians immediately.
- Traffic and/or your distance from the hospital would cause a major delay in receiving emergency care.

If you feel that your situation requires calling 9-1-1, then remember the following to ensure that you receive the best care:

- Speak calmly and clearly to

the dispatcher.

- Provide the name, address, phone number and location of the person in need.
- Describe the nature of the problem.
- Do not hang up with the dispatcher until you are told to do so.

Also, be aware that when calling 9-1-1 from a cellular phone, the dispatcher can only decipher your location based on the cellular tower. Therefore, it is imperative that you give the dispatcher your exact physical location so emergency personnel can be directed to your location quickly.

### Did you know...?

Many rural areas of the United States cannot receive 9-1-1 service because it is out of the network calling area. If your community is not covered, find out your local emergency medical services (EMS) phone number and post it by your phone and save it in your cellular phone in case of an emergency.