

## What to do in a medical emergency

Are you prepared for a medical emergency? Knowing what constitutes an emergency, where to get help and what to do while you're waiting for help can save a life. Here are some tips from the American College of Emergency Physicians.

- 1 First, remember that prevention remains the best cure.** Get routine medical and preventive care from a family doctor. Getting necessary immunizations and treating minor illnesses before they get serious can minimize visits to the emergency department.
- 2 Learn how to recognize emergency warning signs.** Some warning signs of a medical emergency include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure, fainting, sudden dizziness, weakness or change in vision, confusion or change in mental status, sudden severe pain, bleeding that won't stop, severe or persistent vomiting, coughing up or vomiting blood, suicidal or homicidal feelings.
- 3 Know where to get help.** Dial 911, if you need immediate emergency medical help.
- 4 Learn what to do until help arrives.** Knowing CPR and choking rescue procedures is important, especially if you have small children in the house. It's also important to know the basics of first aid, so you can stop serious bleeding, manage shock or handle fractures until emergency help arrives.
- 5 It's important to know what NOT to do.** While it's smart to keep Syrup of Ipecac in the house in case your child swallows poison, it should not be used with all poisons. Call an emergency department or urgent care center for advice (see several St. John Health facilities on the other side of this Resource Guide).
- 6 Never move anyone who is unconscious** or has struck his head or was injured in a car crash, unless he or she is in danger.
- 7 When treating burns, don't use ice or butter or petroleum jelly.** If burns blister, are large or deep, get immediate emergency help.

For medical emergencies that you can't handle, trust the Emergency Medicine Expert Teams at St. John Health, to help. To learn more about our Passion for Healing visit [www.stjohn.org](http://www.stjohn.org)