

Medical Emergencies at Home

Responding to a medical emergency at home requires calm, quick thinking, and preparation. Here is a clear, step-by-step reminder of what to do. Keeping these points in mind can make a critical difference.

Stay Calm and Assess the Situation

- Take a deep breath. Take a moment to compose yourself, and it will clear your head, allowing you to think more effectively.
- Quickly determine what happened. Check for the key indicators: Is the person conscious? Are they breathing normally? Is there significant bleeding or an obvious injury?

Call 911 Immediately if Needed

- Key reasons to call include unconsciousness, not breathing, severe bleeding, or signs of a heart attack or stroke.
- Speak clearly to the dispatcher. Give your exact address, the nature of the emergency, and the condition of the person. Use a speakerphone so you can follow instructions while keeping your hands free.

If Trained and Able, Provide First Aid

- **CPR:** Begin if the person is unresponsive and not breathing.
- **Bleeding:** Apply firm, direct pressure with a clean cloth or bandage.
- **Choking:** Perform the Heimlich maneuver if the person cannot cough, speak, or breathe.
- **Burns:** Cool the burn under cool running water (avoid ice) and cover loosely with a clean cloth.
- **Seizures:** Focus on keeping the person safe from injury; do not restrain them or put anything in their mouth.

Use Your Emergency Kit

- Keep it stocked with essentials. At a minimum, include gloves, various bandages, antiseptic wipes, scissors, and emergency medications.
- **Pro Tip:** Keep a list of family medical conditions, allergies, and current prescriptions inside the kit. This information is invaluable to first responders.

Guide Emergency Responders

- Unlock the front door and turn on porch lights if it's dark.
- If someone else is present, assign them to watch for and wave down the ambulance.
- Ensure your house number is clearly visible from the street, day and night.



Keep Others Safe and Calm

- Move children and pets to a separate room. Consider locking pets away safely, as doors may be left open.
- A calm, quiet atmosphere helps both the patient and the responders.

After the Emergency

- Write down what happened while the details are fresh. This is helpful for follow-up medical care.
- Restock your emergency supplies and review what you learned from the experience.

Preparation is Key

Time is always of the essence in an emergency. Being prepared can make a huge difference in a loved one's life. Having basic first aid and CPR training is essential. Many local fire departments, Red Cross chapters, and community centers offer training. Even a few hours of training can empower you to save a life.

