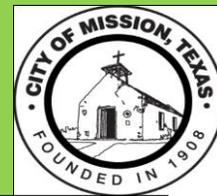


January 24, 2014



Share the Wellness Tip

Should I Stay or Should I go to the ER?

Being able to recognize and respond to an emergency — especially one that requires immediate medical care — can make the difference between life or death. In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention logged nearly 130 million visits to the ER. Emergency doctors recommend we should all be able to recognize warning signs of medical emergencies.

Seek Aid

Call 911 or your local emergency number if someone experiences the following symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing
- Chest or upper abdominal pain that lasts two minutes or more
- Sudden dizziness
- Changes in vision or trouble speaking
- Confusion or a change in mental status
- Sudden or severe pain
- Bleeding that can't be stopped
- Severe, continuing vomiting or diarrhea
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Suicidal threats or thoughts

Take Action

In each of the situations below, your first step should be to call **911** or your local emergency number.

Emergency physicians are also recommending that people with mobile phones add "ICE" entries into their contacts. This stands for "In Case of Emergency," and medical professionals are using it to notify the person's emergency contacts and to get critical medical information when a patient arrives unconscious or unable to answer questions.

- **Broken bone.** Don't move someone with a potential bone fracture, especially of the hip or pelvis, or with any injury to the head, neck or back. However, move the person if they're in a life-threatening situation, such as a burning car or building.
- **Head injury.** Seek immediate medical care for anyone who has a head injury and loses consciousness; has headaches that worsen; experiences weakness, numbness and decreased coordination; or has unequal pupil sizes, convulsions, slurred speech or increasing confusion.
- **Heart attack.** Any of these symptoms could warn of a heart attack: uncomfortable pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain in the center of the chest lasting more than two minutes; pain that spreads to the shoulders, neck, jaw, arms or back; chest discomfort along with lightheadedness, fainting, sweating, nausea or shortness of breath. While waiting for aid, help the person lie down and loosen clothing around the chest, neck and waist.
- **Poisoning.** If you suspect poisoning, call the National Poison Control Center at **800-222-1222**. Call **911** or your local emergency number if the poisoning is life-threatening. If smoke or chemical fumes are involved, get the person out of the area to a place where he or she can breathe fresh air.
- **Stroke.** If someone has symptoms of a stroke, seek help immediately; a delay could be life-threatening. The symptoms include sudden numbness, weakness or paralysis, and drooping of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body; sudden blurred or impaired vision in one or both eyes; slurred speech; difficulty communicating; and loss of balance or coordination.

To find an in-network Urgent Care Center or Retail Health Clinic, use the Provider Finder tool on our website at bcbstx.com or call Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas at 800-810-Blue (2583).

Sources: American College of Emergency Physicians, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010

