

Medical emergencies – when to go

Should I go to the emergency room (ER)?

Whenever an illness or injury occurs, you need to decide how serious it is and how soon to get medical care. This will help you choose whether it is best to call your doctor or go to an emergency department right away.

It pays to think about the right place to go. Treatment in an emergency department can cost 2 - 3 times more than the same care in your doctor's office. Think about this and the other issues listed below when deciding.

Signs of an emergency

How quickly do you need care? If a person or unborn baby could die or be permanently disabled, it is an emergency.

Call 911 to have the emergency team come to you right away if you cannot wait, such as for:

- Choking
- Stopped breathing
- Head injury with passing out, fainting, or confusion
- Injury to neck or spine, especially if there is loss of feeling or inability to move
- Electric shock or lightning strike
- Severe burn
- Seizure that lasted 3 - 5 minutes

Go to an emergency department or call 911 for help for problems such as:

- Trouble breathing
- Passing out, fainting
- Severe chest pain or pressure
- Pain in the arm or jaw
- Unusual or bad headache, especially if it started suddenly
- Suddenly not able to speak, see, walk, or move
- Suddenly weak or drooping on one side of the body
- Dizziness or weakness that does not go away
- Inhaled smoke or poisonous fumes
- Sudden confusion
- Heavy bleeding
- Possible broken bone, loss of movement, especially if the bone is pushing through the skin
- Deep wound
- Serious burn
- Coughing or throwing up blood
- Severe pain anywhere on the body
- Severe allergic reaction with trouble breathing, swelling, hives
- High fever with headache and stiff neck

- High fever that doesn't get better with medicine
- Throwing up or loose stools that don't stop
- Poisoning or overdose of drug or alcohol
- Suicidal thoughts
- Seizures

*information copied from

MedlinePlus <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000593.htm>

If you are not sure what to do, and you don't have one of the serious conditions listed above, call Aloha Nui Family Practice @ 808.961.1400 to speak with one of our medical team members.

If the office is not open your phone call will be forwarded to an automated message service where you may chose to leave a message for a return phone call.