



## When to Call Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) is a system of trained medical professionals who handle out-of-hospital emergencies.

EMS is linked to a nationwide emergency phone number. In the United States, dial 911 ([/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Calling-911-How-and-When-to-Call-for-Help.aspx](#)) to contact EMS.



### Call Emergency Medical Services (EMS) immediately for the following:

- Any time you believe a child needs immediate medical treatment
- Fever ([/English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/default.aspx](#)) in association with abnormal ABCs (appearance, breathing, or circulation)
- Multiple children affected by injury or serious illness at the same time
- A child is acting strangely, is much less alert, or is much more withdrawn
- Difficulty breathing, unable to speak
- Skin or lips that look blue, purple, or gray
- Rhythmic jerking of arms and legs and a loss of responsiveness (seizure ([/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Seizures.aspx](#)))
- Unresponsive
- Decreasing responsiveness
- Any of the following after a head injury ([/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Head-Injury.aspx](#)): decrease in level of alertness, confusion, headache, vomiting, irritability, difficulty walking
- Increasing or severe pain anywhere
- A cut or burn that is large and deep, and will not stop bleeding
- Vomiting blood
- A child with a severe stiff neck, headache, and fever
- A child who is significantly dehydrated ([/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Avoiding-Dehydration.aspx](#)): sunken eyes, not making tears or urinating, lethargic
- Suddenly spreading purple or red rash
- A large volume of blood in the stools
- Hot or cold weather injuries (e.g., frostbite ([/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Frostbite-Prevention.aspx](#)), heat exhaustion ([/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Heat-Exhaustion-and-Heat-Stroke.aspx](#)))

**Note:** In many areas of the United States, EMS can identify the location of a 911 emergency call using special technology. Mobile phone calls, however, cannot always be identified. Always be prepared to tell the EMS dispatcher your exact location. At home keep your street address posted by the telephone. [Back to Top](#)

## Situations that do not necessarily require ambulance transport, but still need medical attention:

- Fever in any age child who looks more than mildly ill
- Fever of >100.5° F in a child younger than 60 days (2 months) old
- Any age child who appears and is acting very ill
- Severe vomiting and/or diarrhea
- A serious cut that may require stitches (/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/When-to-Get-Stitches.aspx) (i.e., a wound that does not hold together by itself after cleaning)
- Any animal bites (/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Animal-Bites.aspx) that puncture the skin
- Any venomous bites or stings (/English/safety-prevention/at-play/Pages/Identifying-Insect-Bites-and-Stings.aspx) with spreading local redness and swelling, or evidence of general illness
- Any medical condition specifically outlined in a child's care plan requiring parental notification

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