



WHEN TO CALL 9-1-1 FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES



Let's take a minute to talk about 911 and the meaning of a true medical emergency.

What is a true "medical emergency"?

A true medical emergency is when you need help right away because you have a serious problem that could make you very sick or cause death. These problems can include breathing or heavy, hard-to-stop bleeding. Pain in your chest is serious. If you are pregnant, and you are in a great deal of pain, that's serious. Uncontrollable diarrhea, throwing up, or somebody passing out are serious problems.

Many times you may not need a hospital. Not every ache and pain is life threatening. Remember: use hospitals and 9-1-1 help when you or somebody you know has a medical emergency, and a medical emergency is a serious problem. If you do not have a medical emergency it may be better to have a friend or a relative with a car drive you to your doctor's office or to a hospital, if you feel you must for non-emergency service. 9-1-1 is not a first aid kit. It is for life threatening, real emergencies.

If I am transported by Emergency Medical Services will I get faster attention at a hospital Emergency Room?

NO! Hospital Emergency Rooms have to treat the most serious cases first, no matter how the patients get there. A heart attack victim or a gunshot victim coming in a personal car or taxicab will be seen quicker than a patient with a less-serious condition. Only your condition when you get there, and not HOW you get there, determines how quick you are seen at a hospital.

When I call 9-1-1, can I pick the hospital that I want to be taken to?

Not always. The main concern of our emergency crews is to get you medical help quickly. This means taking you to the hospital nearest to where they pick you up.

Aren't Emergency Medical Services rescues and crews set-up to give medical attention quickly?

Yes. Our mission is to save lives and transport patients where medical doctors and more equipment are available.

Do medical doctors work for the Fire Department?

A licensed medical doctor is in charge of the Emergency Medical Services system. Our EMS crews have direct, 24-hour telephone contact with doctors at the area hospitals and can call them from the scene of an emergency to get medical direction.

What are other ways I can get medical help?

In many cases, you may simply need to see your own private doctor at his or her office. You can get a ride from friends or relatives, or take a cab.

Sarasota County's 9-1-1 Emergency Medical Services system should **ONLY** be used in a real medical emergency. Keep a good First Aid Kit in your home or office for those emergencies that are non-life threatening. 9-1-1 and Emergency Medical Services are here to help. Help keep our EMS crews available for true life threatening calls...when a life is on the line.