

WHEN TO CALL 911

Americans make more than 200 million calls to 911 every year – to summon the police, the fire department or an ambulance. In a medical crisis, some people panic and call unnecessarily; others postpone getting help because they're not sure if the symptoms are serious enough. Here is when to call 911 without delay and what to do – and not to – while you're waiting for help to arrive.

CALL FOR : A suspected Heart Attack

Symptoms that demand immediate attention include chest pain or pressure, severe palpitations, sudden profound weakness, profuse perspiration and sudden shortness of breath

CALL FOR: A SUSPECTED STROKE

If you or someone near you experiences sudden, marked overall weakness or dizziness, has trouble speaking or understanding, feels weakness in an arm or leg or has a seizure, think 'stroke' particularly if these symptoms are accompanied by a new headache

CALL FOR: SEVERE PAIN OR BLEEDING

Seek help-especially when there is obvious weakness or drowsiness-even after the bleeding has stopped.

CALL FOR: CHOKING

You will need help – even if the victim is conscious

CALL FOR : SERIOUS BURN

In general, burn that needs quick attention is larger than 2-3 inches in diameter, is located on the hands, feet, face, groin or buttocks, or around a major joint, involves all layers of skin, appears black, or dry and white.

CALL FOR: A SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION OR ASTHMA ATTACK

Some allergic reactions to insect bites and food, and asthma attacks that do not respond to inhalers or oral medications, can be life threatening.

CALL FOR: POISONING-BUT ONLY IF VICTIM IS HAVING DIFFICULTY BREATHING OR IS COMATOSED

In all other cases, dial the toll-free National Poison Control Center number 1-800-222-1222 which will direct your call automatically to a local center where experts will be able to provide advice.