

www.scripps.org/news_items/4231-should-you-go-to-the-emergency-room-or-urgent-care

When an emergency strikes, you know you need medical care fast. But what if you're not sure if it's a true emergency? How can you tell if what you or a loved one is experiencing should have you rushing to the ER?

While the answer is not always simple, knowing the difference between urgent care and emergency care and where to seek treatment could save your life in an emergency.

Time for the ER

"Emergency departments are an essential part of our health care system," says Shawn Evans, MD, an emergency medicine physician at Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla. "They are there to provide medical care at any time."

The emergency department was designed to provide fast, life-or-limb-saving care. Many people, however, use the ER as a place to receive urgent care without realizing it. *If you're ever in doubt, it's better to be safe and go to the closest ER.* These are just a few of the conditions that are medical emergencies:

- Persistent chest pain, especially if it radiates to your arm or jaw or is accompanied by sweating, vomiting or shortness of breath
- Persistent shortness of breath or wheezing
- Severe pain, particularly in the abdomen or starting halfway down the back
- Loss of balance or fainting
- Difficulty speaking, altered mental status or confusion
- Weakness or paralysis
- Severe heart palpitations
- Sudden, severe headache
- Sudden testicular pain and swelling
- Newborn baby with a fever
- Intestinal bleeding
- Falls with injury or while taking blood thinning medications
- Loss of vision
- Head and eye injuries
- Broken bones or dislocated joints
- Deep cuts that require stitches – especially on the face
- Head or eye injuries
- Severe flu or cold symptoms
- High fevers or fevers with rash
- Bleeding that won't stop or a large open wound



San Luis Obispo County

Emergency Medical Services Division

Working to assure that our county's residents and visitors receive optimal prehospital care on a daily basis until protocol

ALS Protocols

PROTOCOL

EFFECTIVE DATE

UNIVERSAL

- 600 - Advanced Life Support Protocols 2007
- 601 - Universal Algorithm - REVISIED 01/01/2014

ADULT PROTOCOLS

- 602 - Adult Hemodynamic Instability Definitions 11/1/2010
- 603 - Adult Seizures - REVISIED - Corrected 01/01/2014
- 604 - Adult Allergic Reaction/Anaphylaxis 09/20/2011
- 605 - Adult Altered Level of Consciousness - REVISIED - Corrected 01/01/2014
- 606 - Adult Bradycardia 08/02/2012
- 607 - Adult Cardiac Chest Pain - REVISIED 01/01/2014
- 608 - Adult Hypotension/Shock/Mechanism of Injury 2007
- 609 - Adult Intravenous Therapy/Vascular Access - 2007
- 610 - Adult Pulseless Arrest 08/02/2012
- 611 - Adult Respiratory Distress 03/01/2013
- 612 - Adult Supraventricular Tachycardia - REVISIED 01/01/2014
- 613 - Adult Ventricular Tachycardia With Pulse - REVISIED 01/01/2014
- 614 - Adult Pain Management 09/20/2011
- 615 - Severe Nausea/Vomiting 09/20/2011
- 616 - Suspected Stroke/Transient Ischemic Attack 09/20/2011

PROCEDURES

- 617 - Spinal Precautions 2007
- 618 - Obstructed Airway 2007
- 619 - Needle Cricothyrotomy 2007
- 620 - 12 - Lead ECG 11/01/2010
- 621 - Intraosseous Infusion 03/01/2013
- 622 - Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) 08/02/2012
- 623 - Tourniquet Use - NEW 09/01/2013
- 624 - End-Tidal CO2 Monitoring/Detection (Capnography) - NEW 01/01/2014
- 625 - Intra nasal Medication Administration - NEW - Corrected 01/01/2014

PEDIATRIC

- 630 - Pediatric Hemodynamic Instability Definitions 2011
- 631 - Pediatric Seizures - DELETED SEE 603 01/01/2014
- 632 - Pediatric Allergic Reaction/Anaphylaxis 09/20/2011
- 633 - Pediatric Altered Level of Consciousness - REVISIED 01/01/2014
- 634 - Pediatric Bradycardia 08/02/2012
- 635 - Pediatric Hypotension/Shock/Mechanism of Injury 2011
- 636 - Pediatric Intravenous Therapy/Vascular Access 2011
- 637 - Pediatric Pulseless Arrest 08/02/2012
- 638 - Pediatric Respiratory Distress 09/20/2011
- 639 - Pediatric Supraventricular Tachycardia - REVISIED 01/01/2014
- 640 - Pediatric Ventricular Tachycardia With Pulse - REVISIED 01/01/2014
- 641 - Pediatric Pain Management 2011
- 650 - Behavioral Emergencies - REVISIED 01/14/2015



Photo courtesy



All in One A
Protocols

Related Links
[BLS Protocols](#)
[Drug Formulary](#)
[System-Wide Bu](#)



BLS Protocols

PROTOCOL	EFFECTIVE DATE
CARDIAC ARREST	
501 - Medical Cardiac Arrest	2009
502 - Trauma Cardiac Arrest	2009
503 - Automatic External Defibrillation (AED)	2009
MEDICAL TREATMENT	
510 - Abdominal Pain	2009
511 - Airway Obstruction	2009
512 - Altered Mental Status	2009
513 - Chest Pain - DELETED SEE 607	01/01/2014
514 - Ingestion/Poisoning	2009
515 - Respiratory Distress	2009
516 - Seizures -DELETED SEE 603	01/01/2014
517 - Stroke	2009
518 - Shock (Non-Traumatic)	2009
TRAUMA TREATMENT	
530 - Abdominal Trauma	2009
531 - Burns	2009
532 - Chest Trauma	2009
533 - Eye Injuries	2009
534 - Head Trauma	2009
535 - Orthopedic Injuries	2009
536 - Soft Tissue Injuries	2009
537 - Spinal Injuries	2009
538 - Shock (Traumatic)	2009
ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCIES	
550 - Allergic Reactions	2009
551 - Bites/Stings	2009
552 - Cold Related Emergencies	2009
553 - Hazardous Materials	2009
554 - Heat Related Emergencies	2009
555 - Near Drowning	2009
556 - Snakebite	2009
OBSTETRICAL EMERGENCIES	
560 - Childbirth	2009
561 - Newborn Care	2009
PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCIES	
570 - Behavioral - DELETED SEE 650	01/01/2014
PROCEDURES	
580 - EMT Use of Oxygen	2009
581 - Spinal Immobilization	2009
582 - EMT Monitoring of IVs	2009
583 - Tourniquet Use Policy - NEW	9/1/2013
583 - Tourniquet Use Matrix - NEW	9/1/2013



Photo courtesy Cambria Community Health



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Related Links
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[System-Wide Bulletins and](#)



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Drug Formulary

- ⌵ Activated Charcoal
- ⌵ Adenosine (Adenocard)
- ⌵ Albuterol (Proventil, Ventolin)
- ⌵ Aspirin - **REVISED 01/01/2014**
- ⌵ Atropine Sulfate
- ⌵ Calcium Chloride
- ⌵ Dextrose 25%
- ⌵ Dextrose 50%
- ⌵ Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
- ⌵ Dopamine (Intropin)
- ⌵ Epinephrine 1:1,000
- ⌵ Epinephrine 1:10,000
- ⌵ Glucagon Hydrochloride
- ⌵ Oral Glucose
- ⌵ Lidocaine (Xylocaine)
- ⌵ Midazolam - **NEW - Corrected 01/01/2014 -**
- ⌵ Morphine Sulfate
- ⌵ Narcan (Naloxone)
- ⌵ Nitroglycerin
- ⌵ Oxygen
- ⌵ Potassium Chloride (KCL)
- ⌵ Sodium Bicarbonate
- ⌵ Ondansetron (Zofran)



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[ALS Protocols](#)
[System-Wide B](#)