

When It's Just You in an Emergency

"Mom!" you yell down the stairs. "Where's my math book? I can't find it and the bus is coming! Please help me ... it's an **emergency!**"

It is kind of an emergency with the bus coming and all, but what about a **medical emergency**? That kind of emergency is usually more serious. If you don't have your math book or miss the bus, that would be bad. But a medical emergency means someone needs care from a doctor right away. Let's find out the right thing to do.

Quick Thinking: What Would You Do?

Liz and her little brother Jamie are out for a walk. Jamie decides to race ahead down a very steep hill. He's running pretty fast when he suddenly trips. Over and over he falls, rolling down the hill at high speed until he's sprawled out on the sidewalk at the bottom.

Liz rushes to her brother's side, hoping that he's OK. Then she sees some blood on the pavement. And Jamie isn't moving at all. What should she do? First things first: Liz should look around for a grown-up and call him or her to help right away. If no one is close by, she should make a phone call either on a cell phone or from the closest phone.

Calling for help is the most important thing a kid can do in an emergency.

If you're going to be the one making the emergency phone call, here's what to do:

- Take a deep breath to calm down a little.
- Call 911.
- Tell the operator there's an emergency.
- Say your name and where you are (the exact address if you know it).
- Explain what happened and how many people are hurt. (The operator will need all the information you can provide, so give as many details as you can.)
- Follow all of the operator's instructions carefully.
- **Stay on the line** until the operator says it's OK to hang up.

After calling for help, your first thought might be to rush over to the person who's injured. But **stop and look** before you do. Make sure the scene is safe. If it's not, wait in a safe spot until a grown-up or an emergency team arrives.

If the scene is safe, and as soon as Liz is sure someone is calling 911 — or she has called it herself — she could return to her brother and wait until help arrives. (She shouldn't move her brother at all because he could have a neck or other bone injury. Moving someone who has that sort of injury can make it much worse.) She can help him feel calm by being calm herself.

In Case of Emergency

The best way to handle an emergency is to be prepared for one. Knowing what to do ahead of time can help you stay in control so that you can help. Here are some suggestions on how to be ready to help in an emergency:



- When you're outdoors, make sure you're in an area where you can call out for help even if you don't have a phone with you.
- Know how to dial **911** or your local emergency number (in most areas in the United States, it's 911).
- If you have one, carry a cell phone or know how to use your parent's cell phone.
- Learn first aid. Look for basic first-aid classes with your local Red Cross, the YMCA or YWCA, the Boy or Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, your local hospital, and other organizations. Or ask your school nurse to have a first-aid class just for students in your school.

It's scary to think about someone getting hurt. But the truth is that accidents can and do happen. They happen when people are being careless and when they're careful. Sometimes, kids are the ones who get hurt. Sometimes, grown-ups get hurt. Either way, it's good to know what to do if someone needs emergency medical help. Even though you're a kid, you can make a big difference by doing the right thing.

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