

Four Steps to Take in an Emergency Situation

Practice these steps in case of an emergency.

1. **Assess the situation.** Is your consumer bleeding or did he have a blow to the head, a fall, or an allergic reaction? Is he experiencing any symptom specifically related to his illness? What were you both doing just prior to the emergency? Is he responsive? Are his pupils enlarged and are they the same size? Was there a complaint of pain or anything else relevant? What is different or unusual? Observations like these are important in anticipation of calling 911.
2. **Call 911.** Do this when you have even the slightest hint that your consumer is facing a life-threatening emergency. Do not attempt to take anyone with a potentially serious problem to the hospital yourself; instead, call 911 immediately. Give the 911 operator as much information as you can, so that emergency personnel can be fully prepared to assist when they arrive. It is crucial to accurately describe the situation and speak slowly and clearly when talking with the 911 operator. Mention any pre-existing conditions, such as a history of heart attack, diabetes, a bleeding disorder, or asthma.
3. **Loosen any tight clothing.** Make sure your consumer has nothing constricting the airways, like a restrictive shirt or tie, and keep him/her in a comfortable position while you wait for help.
4. **Comfort and communicate.** Talk to your consumer until 911 arrives. It is recommended to keep the person experiencing a medical emergency awake by talking to him/her but not encouraging him/her to talk. Take slow, deep breaths to help stay calm.

For a caregiver, an emergency can be both alarming and frightening, but when you are prepared, you can make a tremendous difference in your consumer's well-being.