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AMBULANCE OR NOT?

What is an emergency?

An emergency medical condition means the sudden and, at the time, unexpected onset of a health condition that requires immediate medical treatment and/or an operation. If the treatment is not available, the emergency could result in weakened bodily functions, serious and lasting damage to organs, limbs or other body parts, or even death.

N.B. If an ambulance is utilised and it is deemed to have not been an emergency, your scheme may well repudiate the claim and you will become liable for the costs thereof.

When should I call an ambulance vs. when I should not?

EMERGENCY - CALL AN AMBULANCE

NOT AN EMERGENCY - PLEASE REFER TO YOUR PHARMACIST / GP

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a person has or is reasonably believed to have suffered an acute injury or illness requiring medical attention and/or medical transportation by ambulance • A doctor/ registered nurse/ paramedic has requested the urgent transport of a patient by ambulance • Acute life threatening scenario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only indication for use is availability of transport. • Patient's life or usual activities would not be immediately threatened by referral to an alternative care facility for treatment at a later time. • Non urgent health need outside of usual office hours • Alternative transport/ home remedy available
<p>Persistent shortness of breath / Wheezing / Ongoing chest pain that worsens on breathing. Wheezing and difficulty of breathing associated with asthma (with no response to usual medications)</p>	<p>Coughs, colds, 'Flu, Bronchitis, Earache, Sore throat - with or without fever, general weakness</p>
<p>Acute or persistent, severe chest pain, especially if it radiates to your arm or jaw and is accompanied by sweating, vomiting or shortness of breath.</p>	<p>Ongoing, dull, nagging chest discomfort.</p>

Sudden, severe onset abdominal pain (The kind that makes it impossible to walk & wakes you up in agony)	Abdominal pain caused by menstruation, constipation and / or other minor abdominal complaints.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty speaking • Confusion / Altered mental state • Weakness / Paralysis • Sudden loss of balance, especially with a history of high blood pressure / in the elderly • Sudden loss of vision • Seizures • Unconsciousness 	Fainting, Dizziness, Headaches in an otherwise healthy person
<u>Fever:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 40°C • Does NOT respond to Paracetamol • Associated with all-over body rash • Children under 2 months with fever > 38.5°C 	<u>Fever:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <38.5°C • Responds to use of Paracetamol • No rash
Ongoing, persistent diarrhoea & vomiting with dehydration (usually >8 episodes/ day)	Diarrhoea and / or vomiting, patient able to walk around
<u>Trauma:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep cuts that require stitches – especially on the face • Bleeding that won't stop • Large open wounds • Broken bones / Dislocated joints • Head injuries with loss of consciousness • Eye injuries 	<u>Trauma:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common sprains & strains • Superficial cuts • Bleeding stopped with pressure

Severe testicular discomfort	Painful Urination, Blood in the urine
<p>Burns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large surface area • Burns to the face or a large part of the hand • Where the burn encircles the limb • Electrical burns 	<p>Burns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor burns and scalding • Small surface area
Major allergic reaction: Breathing difficulties, swelling of lips/ tongue or throat, dizziness or fainting, rash and itching over entire body	Minor allergic reactions: watery eyes, runny nose, minor rash and itching
Poisoning – accidental or intentional	
Back pain after trauma (such as falling), or after back surgery < 3 months previously	Back pain after heavy lifting, generalised back spasm
<p>Pregnancy complicated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before 37 weeks are completed, emergency determined • Rupture of membranes (waters broken) • Excessive bleeding during pregnancy • Contractions \leq 5 minutes apart • Complication in current or previous pregnancies • Pregnancy Induced Hypertension diagnosed • Crowning of the head 	Normal pregnancy/ labour reached > 37 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicidal thoughts expressed • Sudden aggression / psychosis • Previous history of psychiatric admission, possible relapse requiring emergency admission 	Depression/ emotional trauma