

HEALTH & SAFETY: CHANGE IN STATUS

“Responding to Change in Status”

BQIS/Outreach Fact Sheets provide a general overview on topics important to supporting an individual’s health and safety and to improving their quality of life.

Objectives

Individuals will understand how to respond to varying levels of change in status.

Definitions

Potentially Life Threatening Medical Emergency: Anything that could result in death of the person.

Serious Medical Issue: An issue that could result in adverse health or safety for the person if medical care is not obtained promptly.

Minor Medical Issue: An issue that can be handled with minor first aid or written doctor’s orders.

Facts

Importance of Responding to Change in Status:

- If you think you need to call someone do it! Do not call to ask someone if you should. If you have any question in your mind, make the call.
- Timeliness can be the difference between life and death.
- Make the call and initiate First-aid or CPR as necessary.

Recommended Actions and Prevention Strategies

1. Always call 911 if an individual:

- Has bleeding that can’t be controlled.
- Is or becomes unconscious (not related to a seizure).
- Has no pulse.
- Has trouble breathing or is breathing in a strange way.

- Has chest pain or pressure.
- Has severe injuries such as broken bones as a result of an accident.
- Is choking (not breathing and not coughing).
- Has injuries to the head, neck, or back.
- Has gone into shock (pale, blue lips or fingertips, weak and rapid pulse, rapid breathing, low BP, feeling of impending doom, change in consciousness).
- Has a seizure lasting five minutes or has continuous seizures.
- Has suffered electrical shock.
- Is drowning or near drowning.
- Experiences paralysis, numbness, confusion.
- Suffers severe burns (burns that cover more than one part of the body or on head, neck, hands, feet, or genitals).
- Has signs of stroke-numbness, slurred speech or cannot move a body part.
- Vomiting blood or continuous vomiting.
- Rash that appears rapidly and covers large areas

(not intended to be an all-inclusive list or to replace person-specific indicators)

2. If an individual appears to have been poisoned, first call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 to get advice and then call 911.

3. When you call 911:

- Tell them:
 - Who you are
 - Where you are
 - What has happened
 - When it happened
- Stay on the phone until the dispatcher tells you to hang up.
- While waiting for emergency medical personnel, stay calm and reassure the individual, stay with him or her, and do necessary first-aid and/or CPR.
- If possible, send another person to watch for the ambulance to quickly guide the emergency personnel to the scene.
- When the emergency personnel arrive, provide them with additional information including current medications, allergies, diagnosis, guardian/Healthcare Representative information, insurance information, and the name and phone number of the individual's primary doctor. Send or bring copies of the information with the person if possible .

4. For Serious Medical Issues:

Call the person's physician as soon as possible for things such as:

- Rapid change in behavior
- Increase in challenging behavior such as aggression or self abuse

- Sleeping more than usual
- Unusual fatigue
- Holding abdomen
- Dramatic change in facial expression or demeanor
- Evidence of pain or discomfort
- New or sudden onset of incontinence of bowel or bladder
- Onset of fever of 101 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea or vomiting lasting more than four hours
- Rash lasting several days or getting worse
- Increase in seizure frequency, intensity or duration
- Occurrence of first seizure or a seizure after extended period of time without seizure
- Onset of limping, change in gait/ambulation, or difficulty in movement
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Infection in injury site
- Swelling

(not intended to be an all-inclusive list or to replace person-specific indicators)

5. For Minor Symptoms or Medical Issues:

- Address minor scratches, infrequent minor discomfort, and infrequent mild indigestion, etc. with simple First Aid or written doctor's orders.
- Doctor's orders must have specific instructions and listed with PRN orders in person's medical record.
- Notify the physician if using a PRN medication repeatedly or find that it is not effective.

Learning Assessment

Questions that can be used to verify a person's competency in the material contained in this Fact Sheet:

1. True or False: If you need to call 911, you may hang up as soon as you relay the nature of the emergency and your location.
2. True or False: Call your supervisor before calling 911.
3. Times when the appropriate action would be to call a person's physician include:
 - A. Bleeding that cannot be controlled
 - B. New onset of no control of bladder
 - C. Difficulty breathing
 - D. Slurred speech

References

State of California Department of Developmental Services: Community Care Facility
Direct Support Professional Training Program

Mary Ciccarelli, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and Clinical Medicine, Associate
Chair of Education in Pediatrics, Indiana University School of Medicine

Related Resources

“Recognizing Change in Status” Fact Sheet

Outreach Services Library of Fact Sheets, Reminders and Resources at DDRSOutreach.IN.gov.

Learning Assessment Answers

1. False
2. False
3. B

Outreach Services

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As a service for persons supporting individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, BQIS/ Outreach developed the Outreach Fact Sheet Library. The information provided is designed to enhance the understanding of the topic and does not replace other professional or medical instructions or individually developed plans. For more fact sheets and information, please visit DDRSOutreach.IN.gov.



Indiana Family & Social Services Administration
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