

# Every Minute Counts

## Recognizing Medical Emergencies

At SampsonRMC, we believe it's crucial to recognize the signs of a medical emergency— because correctly interpreting these signs could potentially save your life. Everyone experiences changes in their bodies that can make you question when it's appropriate to seek emergency care. For the potential medical emergencies listed below, time can be of the essence, and delaying treatment can often lead to more serious consequences. This information provides guidance regarding some of the most common signs and symptoms that require a visit to the closest Emergency Department.

- **Chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure lasting two minutes or more**  
Unexplained chest pain can be a sign that you need to call 911 or head to the ER. Unfortunately, the average person having symptoms waits three hours before getting help, which is why many heart attack patients die before reaching the hospital.
- **Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath**  
Any struggle to catch a breath requires immediate, emergency medical attention.
- **Any sudden or severe pain**  
Severe pain with an injury warrants a trip to the ER. But severe pain without observable injury can be a sign of an illness or internal trauma.
- **Uncontrolled bleeding**  
If you have excessive bleeding partnered with visible muscle, tendons, or bone, seek immediate medical attention. Deep cuts and gashes may need more than stitches, including surgery or other possible treatments.
- **Confusion or change in mental status**  
New onset of weakness on one side of the body, slurred speech, or difficulty making words could be signaling a stroke; time is of the essence and it's important to seek Emergency Care right away.
- **Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea**  
Seek emergency medical help if symptoms are accompanied by pain or severe headache, your vomit contains blood, or if you have signs or symptoms of dehydration -- excessive thirst, dry mouth, infrequent urination, dark-colored urine, and dizziness or light-headedness upon standing.
- **Suicidal or violent feelings**  
Emergency services can provide access to behavioral health services. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) provides free and confidential resources and support for people of all ages in distress or crisis.

If you are experiencing or think you may be experiencing a life-threatening medical emergency, immediately call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room.

### We Care

With 24-hour physician coverage, SampsonRMC providers will evaluate and treat all emergent patients with quality care. SampsonRMC also coordinates with major medical centers for medical or trauma airlift and ground transport.

