

This brochure is a guideline for preparing in advance for medical emergencies involving children, with a special section on children with special health care needs.



New York State Emergency Medical Services For Children

New York State Department of Health
Bureau of Emergency Medical Services
Hedley Park Place, 433 River Street
Suite 303
Troy, New York 12180

Phone: (518) 402-0996
Fax: (518) 402-0985

This brochure has been made possible, in part, by grant funding provided by the Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Emergency Medical Services for Children Program in collaboration with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration through project #1H33 MC00069-03.

Be Prepared for Medical Emergencies Involving Your Child

Be Prepared

It is important to be prepared before your child has a medical emergency. Being prepared can help decrease the time it takes for your child to receive the proper care and can help you think more clearly during an emergency.

- ◆ Know your local emergency number (9-1-1 or your local emergency number if your community does not have 9-1-1).
 - Teach other children in the home how and when to call 9-1-1 or other local emergency number.
- ◆ Be prepared to tell the 9-1-1 dispatcher:
 - your address OR the address of the ill or injured child if you are not calling from the same location;
 - the child's condition, for example: conscious or not, having difficulty breathing, heavy bleeding, etc.;
 - directions to the address, including specific descriptions (for example, brown house)
 - a phone number for the dispatcher to call back for additional information.
- ◆ Post your local emergency number on or near each phone.
- ◆ Make sure your house number can be seen from the street day or night.
- ◆ Have written directions to your house on hand at home for other caregivers.
- ◆ Decide who will do what during a medical emergency, such as calling 9-1-1, staying with the child, or arranging for care of other children left behind when your child and a parent/caregiver leave in an ambulance.
- ◆ Attend a cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) course
 - * for Children with Special Health Care Needs, contact your child's healthcare provider to learn rescue breathing techniques appropriate for your child's condition.
- ◆ Take a first aid course.
 - Contact your American Red Cross chapter, American Heart Association, or local EMS agency for information on where to take CPR and first aid courses.

If Your Child has Special Health Care Needs

More planning may be needed to prepare for medical emergencies for a child with special health care needs. They may need emergency medical care more often and may have complex medical conditions.

In addition to the tips provided for all children, consider the following:

- ◆ Notify or meet with your local EMS agency and/or Public Safety Answering Point (9-1-1 dispatch center) prior to a medical emergency to inform them where you live and to tell them about your child's condition.
 - * Contact your county emergency management office for the non-emergency phone number of your local Public Safety Answering Point.
 - ◆ Meet with school nurses or administrators to have a medical emergency plan in place and practiced.
 - ◆ Make a plan for back-up emergency support of power, medical equipment, phone lines, etc., in case these are down for any length of time.
 - * Contact your local utilities - electric, gas, and phone companies – and ask them to register your home as high
- ◆ Have replacement supplies on hand if your child is dependent on technology.
 - ◆ Consider medical alert jewelry for your child.
 - ◆ When emergency medical providers arrive, be prepared to tell them what they need to know to treat your child. Include any medications, physicians, and how your child's signs and symptoms differ now from what is usually normal for them. YOU are the expert on your child's condition.
 - ◆ When going to the hospital emergency room, bring any medications your child is taking with you.
 - ◆ Consider preparing a written emergency information form to keep with your child at home, school, day care, or wherever they are likely to be.

priority for restoring services. All utilities in the state are required by law to maintain lists of customers who are on life support or who are special needs customers. Call the customer service number listed on your utility bill to find out how to register to receive high priority for having services restored.

Include:

- parent/guardian contact information including phone number(s);
 - physician(s) contact information including emergency phone number or off-hours number;
 - child's baseline vital signs;
 - child's diagnoses, previous surgeries and hospitalizations;
 - child's medications including dosages and how they are given;
 - allergies and immunizations;
 - equipment needed, such as oxygen, suction equipment, etc., and;
 - any procedures to be avoided.
- ◆ Keep the emergency information form in a safe, easy to find place, such as the inside of the refrigerator door. Be sure to place it in a sealed container or plastic storage bag and label it as the Emergency Information Form for your child. Keep another copy of the form somewhere else and *remember to update the information if your child's emergency information changes.* Tell all family members, babysitters, and caregivers the location of the form.

Visit the American College of Emergency Physicians web site to download an Emergency Information Form at:

www.acep.org/public/specialneeds

OR

Call 1-800-320-0610, ext. 3006

For additional information for families, visit the web site

www.ems-c.org/family/framefamily.htm

OR

Call the Emergency Medical Services for Children National Resource Center at (202) 884-4927.