

# Pediatric Emergencies

*What Should You Know?*



No parent wants to think about the chance of their children experiencing an injury or illness that requires a trip to the hospital emergency room. But it happens every day. Your best bet is to be as prepared as you can be.

The pediatric doctors at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital have developed this tip sheet to help you prepare for emergencies, learn when you should call **9-1-1** or visit the emergency room, and what you should do on your way there. The Alexandra & Steven Cohen Children's Emergency Department of NewYork-Presbyterian Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital is one of only three Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Centers in New York State and features the region's highest number of board-certified physicians in emergency medicine and pediatrics. The Pediatric Emergency Department at NewYork-Presbyterian Phyllis and David Komansky Center for Children's Health — a Level One Trauma Center and regional burn center — provides care for critically ill and injured children of all ages.



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## What Should You Know?

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO GET ORGANIZED

- Place a copy of your child's insurance information and emergency contacts in an easily accessible location, such as on the refrigerator door or in a diaper bag.
- Make sure your child's school has up-to-date emergency contact information.
- If you go out of town, leave an emergency medical authorization form for family members, babysitters, and other caretakers to ensure that your child can receive emergency treatment if needed.

### YOU SHOULD VISIT THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT IF YOUR CHILD:

- Has an open wound, to evaluate if stitches are needed.
- Has experienced any injury or burn, or is refusing to move a limb or to walk.
- Is running a fever above 102°F to 104°F in older children — call your pediatrician and/or visit the Emergency Department.
- Has a rash associated with a fever.
- Is having trouble breathing, speaking, or swallowing.
- Shows any alteration in mental status or a feeling of sluggishness.
- Is not acting like himself/herself.

### FOR BABIES LESS THAN 3 MONTHS OLD

Call your pediatrician or visit the Emergency Department if:

- Your infant has a fever of 100.4°F or higher. Any fever in infants this young can be dangerous.

- Your child is showing any signs of dehydration, poor feeding, green-colored vomit, or decreased urine output.
- Your baby is demonstrating any alteration in mental status, sluggishness, or poor sucking ability.

### WHEN SHOULD YOU CALL 9-1-1?

- Always call **9-1-1** if you have any doubts about how severe the situation is or if your child:
- Has lost consciousness.
- Is not acting like himself or is very lethargic (sluggish).
- Is vomiting after falling or hitting her/his head.

### WHEN GOING TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT:

- Your child should not eat or drink anything on the way to the hospital, so as not to interfere with certain medications that may be required for treatment.
- **Stay calm.** Your child will mirror your actions and emotions. Hysterical behavior in parents often leads to hysterical behavior in children.

### WHERE SHOULD YOU GO IN NEW YORK CITY?

- For extreme emergencies, always go to the nearest hospital, or call **9-1-1**.
- Try to go to a hospital with a dedicated pediatric emergency department.
- If your child suffers from a burn of any kind, NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center features a renowned regional Level 1 burn center.

 For more information about pediatric emergency care at NewYork-Presbyterian, visit [nyp.org/kids](https://www.nyp.org/kids).

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