

Your Local Hospital: What Do You Know About It?

If you think your local hospital is staffed and equipped to handle any emergency that may occur at your facility, you may need to reevaluate your opinion. It's a good idea for your facility's healthcare staff to thoroughly understand what medical emergencies your local hospital can—and can't—handle. Many hospitals have downsized, reconfigured, or could be temporarily full. If your local hospital is just going to pass the patient to another hospital, there could be a significant delay in treatment time.

Here are a couple of suggestions:

- Talk with your local rescue squad to identify an appropriate landing site if a Med Flight helicopter is called. Know the scope of emergency these hospitals can handle.
- If your facility has an RN (particularly in the case of head or spinal injury), you may want to establish a protocol that allows the nurse to call the hospital directly and order a Med Flight helicopter as opposed to waiting for ground transport.
- Talk with your local hospital's emergency department. Make a list of specific injuries that the hospital can't treat and then identify the nearest hospital that can do so. Ask about severe burns, spinal injuries, TIAs (mini-strokes), heart attacks, and head injuries.

Your local hospital may be able to stabilize some of these injuries, but the paramedics on a Life Flight helicopter can do just about everything the hospital can do. The savings in time to get the patient to the appropriate level of care may be crucial.