



Collaboration agreement  
Between the Ministero della Salute and Agenas

## Information campaign “The correct use of the emergency services”

### Informative Content



## **Information campaign**

### ***“The correct use of the emergency services”***

### **The information shared at a national level**

Access to information helps to increase the ability of citizens to manage resources/services, make decisions and solve problems. It is one of the essential elements for promoting a responsible participation of citizens in the management of the health system. Better informed citizens are more aware and competent in recognising their own needs for assistance and identifying the most suitable structure to answer to these needs. Promoting knowledge of the available health services, the means of accessing them and their correct use means increasing the empowerment of citizens.

This is the idea behind the project for the national information Campaign, “The correct use of the emergency services”, launched in February 2010 by the Ministero della Salute (Ministry of Health) and Agenas – Agenzia nazionale per i servizi sanitari regionali (National agency for regional healthcare services). The information campaign will have a total duration of two years and is addressed to the entire population, with particular regard to young people and foreign citizens.

It aims to promote information on the different services available in case of emergency, how to access them and give instructions on which is the best to contact depending on the circumstances. The underlying belief is that correct information on care options enables citizens to choose the services fitting best to their needs, thus contributing to the improvement of the services themselves.

This project develops in accordance with the principles of empowerment, following a methodology based on intersectoriality and on the active involvement of stakeholders, Associations for safeguarding and representing citizens, the Regions concerned, the Institutions and the Scientific Companies.

The campaign aims at spreading some basic contents (which will be the same at the national level) on the use of emergency services. These will be divided into six different sections presented in the following pages:

1. What is number 1-1-8
2. Calling the number 1-1-8
3. Waiting for the emergency services
4. The accident and emergency department
5. Access to the accident and emergency department
6. Continuity of care service (out-of hours general practitioner service).

This information standard, defined in accordance with the literature and the experience in the field, has been shared at the national level by the Regions, Independent Provinces and Associations, Scientific Companies and Professional Associations. It can also be adapted to the specific target and context in which it is to be spread.

## 118 - SECTION N.1

### WHAT IS THE NUMBER 1-1-8

- 1-1-8 is the reference number where to call for help in situation of emergency/urgency\*.
- The number 1-1-8 connects the citizen with an Operation Headquarters which receives calls, evaluates the seriousness of the situation and, if necessary, sends staff and emergency vehicles most suitable for the situation. The headquarters will manage the first aid from the place of the event to the most suitable hospital.
- 1-1-8 is a free number and is active across the entire national territory, **24 hours a day**.
- The number 1-1-8 can be called from any telephone (landline or mobile phone). Mobile phones can make calls to the emergency services (118, 112, 113, 115) even when they have no credit. In the case of calls from phone boxes, coins or phone cards are not necessary.

\*

#### Emergency

1. Statistically not very frequent
2. Involves one or more patients
3. There is an immediate risk of death
4. Requires therapeutic and life-saving interventions immediately or as quickly as possible.

#### Urgency

1. Statistically more frequent
2. Involves one or more patients
3. There is no immediate risk of death
4. Requires therapeutic interventions in a short time.

## CALLING THE NUMBER 1-1-8

### When to call the number 1-1-8

In case of situations where there is a risk to a person's life or health, such as:

- difficulty (or lack) of breathing
- chest pain
- prolonged loss of consciousness (the person cannot speak or is not responding)
- trauma and wounds with evident bleeding
- accident (domestic, road, sporting, agricultural, industrial)
- difficulty in speaking or difficulty/ inability to use one or both limbs on the same side
- signs of suffocation, poisoning, drowning or burns.

### How to call the number 1-1-8:

- Dial the 1-1-8.
- Calmly respond to the operator's questions and hold the line until asked to do so.
- Give your own phone number.
- Specify the place where the event is taking place (town, street, street number).
- Explain the event (a person is unwell; there has been an accident, etc.) and explain what you can see.
- Specify the number of people involved.
- Describe the condition of the person involved: *is he/she responding, breathing, bleeding, has pains?*
- Describe the specific situation: small child, pregnant woman, elderly person, person with known illnesses (heart conditions, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.).

### IMPORTANT

- ⇒ The conversation must be carried out with a clear voice and all the information requested by the operator must be provided so that he can analyse them: it is not a waste of time!!
- ⇒ At the end of the conversation make sure the receiver has been hung up.
- ⇒ Free up the phone used to call for help: you could be called at any moment for additional information or instructions.

## 118 - SECTION N. 3

### WAITING FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

#### What to do

- Follow the instructions provided by the 1-1-8 staff.
- Cover the patient and protect him/her from the environment.
- Encourage and reassure the patient.
- In case of accident, do not hinder the arrival of the emergency services and signal the danger to passers-by.
- Carefully unfasten tight garments (belt, tie) to facilitate breathing.

#### What not to do

- DO NOT panic.
- DO NOT move the traumatized person unless this is strictly necessary as a result of danger within the surrounding area (gas, fire, immediate risk of a building collapsing, etc.).
- DO NOT give the person food or drinks.
- DO NOT allow them to take medicines.

### IMPORTANT

**NEVER use the line you used to call the emergency services: you may be called at any time for additional information or instructions.**

### WHEN NOT TO CALL THE NUMBER 1-1-8

- For all situations that are not considered urgent.
- To ask for specialist medical advice.
- To ask for general health service information: working hours, booking of specialist examinations or diagnostic tests, information on chemist's open on a holiday.

## A&E - SECTION N. 4

### ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (IL PRONTO SOCCORSO)

#### What is it

The Accident and Emergency department of a hospital is the only one in which the treatment of medical emergencies is guaranteed, i.e. pathological, spontaneous or traumatic conditions, which require immediate diagnostic and therapeutic interventions.

#### When to go

It is best to use the Accident and Emergency department for acute and urgent problems that cannot be resolved by your General Practitioner (G.P.), paediatrician or by the doctors working on continuity of care service (out-of hours general practitioner service).

#### When not to go

The Accident and Emergency department is not the place where to go for examination of non-urgent or chronic clinical aspects.

Therefore, do not go to the Accident and Emergency department:

- to avoid waiting lists in case of non-urgent specialist examinations
- to obtain prescriptions and/or certificates
- to obtain clinical controls for non-urgent situations
- to avoid contacting your own G.P.
- to obtain services that could be provided at your G.P.'s practice
- for convenience, out of habit, to avoid payment of the prescription charge.

### IMPORTANT

Every unnecessary visit to the Accident and Emergency department could lead to delays for people needing urgent care.

A correct use of the health service keeps it running smoothly and ensures a high quality of service for all users.

The success of the Accident and Emergency department depends on all of us.

## A&E - SECTION N. 5

### ACCESS TO THE ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (IL PRONTO SOCCORSO)

#### How to access

You can access the Accident and Emergency department directly or by ambulance by calling the number 1-1-8.

#### The Triage and the colour Codes: the health traffic light

- When arriving at the Accident and Emergency department, there will be the evaluation of the patient's level of urgency by trained nurses. A colour code will be given to establish the priority of access to treatment on the basis of the seriousness of the case. This does not depend on the arrival time at the hospital.

This approach is called "Triage" and it aims to avoid delays for urgent cases.

- The Triage does not aim at reducing waiting times, but at ensuring that patients in extremely serious conditions do not have to waste precious time.



**Code red:** very critical, danger of death, maximum priority, immediate access to treatment;



**Code yellow:** fairly critical, high level of risk, potential danger of death; treatment cannot be delayed;



**Code green:** not very critical, no risk of condition worsening, treatment can be delayed;



**Code white:** not critical, non-urgent patients.

### IMPORTANT

At the Accident and Emergency department priority is given to the most serious patient regardless of time of arrival.

Arriving at the Accident and Emergency department by ambulance does not mean you will be visited more quickly.

## **CONTINUITY OF CARE SERVICE OUT-OF HOURS GENERAL PRACTITIONER SERVICE (IL SERVIZIO DI CONTINUITÀ ASSISTENZIALE – ex Guardia medica)**

### **What it is**

- This is the service which, in the absence of your G.P., guarantees basic medical assistance for situations that cannot be postponed, i.e. in the case of health problems for which you cannot wait for your G.P. or paediatrician's practice to open.
- The service is available at night or during bank holidays and days before bank holidays.
- The continuity of care physician can:
  - make home visits which cannot be delayed
  - prescribe medicines for therapies that cannot be delayed, or that are necessary for the continuation of therapies the interruption of which could worsen the patient's conditions
  - issue medical certificates in case of strict necessity for a maximum period of three days
  - recommend hospitalization.

### **How to access**

The service can be accessed through a special phone number you can find from your ASL - *Azienda Sanitaria Locale* (Local Health Enterprise).

On the basis of the assessment of the patient's need, the continuity of care physician can give medical advice by phone, by an examination at a clinic (where possible), or a home visit.

It is the doctor's responsibility to decide, on the basis of National and/or regional guidelines, whether a home visit is necessary.

### **When to call**

For health problems which arise at night or during bank holidays and days before bank holidays, when your G.P. is not in service, and for which you cannot wait.

- The service is available:
- at night: from Monday to Sunday, from 8.00 pm to 8.00 am.
  - by day: - for days before bank holidays, from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm
  - on bank holidays, from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm

### **When not to call**

For emergencies or urgent health matters (for which you should directly contact the 1-1-8 emergency Service).

To book specialist examinations and visits.