

Table 15-1  
**Medical Emergencies: Immediately Activate EMS**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Signs and Symptoms</b>	<b>Management (Activate EMS)</b>
Rapid changes (within minutes) in vital signs	Significant changes in BP, HR, RR, body temperature	ABCs, monitor vital signs until EMS arrives
Shock	Systolic BP <90 mmHg, tachycardia and hyperpnea, pallor, diaphoresis, cyanosis, altered cognition, lethargy	Elevate feet, ABCs, monitor vital signs
Nontraumatic syncope or unconsciousness	Complete loss of consciousness lasting over 1 minute	ABCs, monitor vital signs, mental and neurological tests if awakens (urgent referral if reported by subject but not observed by examiner)
Profuse bleeding or bleeding from mucous membranes or orifices	Large volume of bleeding that persists longer than 1 or 2 minutes	Treat for shock, apply pressure points if applicable
Abdominal rigidity or severe pain	Tenderness to palpation, unusual distention, palpable organs/mass	Assess for other systemic signs; monitor vital signs
Prolonged or unexplained severe vomiting or diarrhea	Accompanied by syncope, hematemesis, fever	Prevent dehydration, treat for shock, monitor vital signs
Known or suspected poisoning	History of exposure, severe vomiting, headache, dyspnea, hypotension, altered consciousness, syncope, loss of motor coordination or control	Call poison control or read packaging if available
Seizure	No known history of epilepsy or previous seizure	Protect head, ABCs, remove to quiet area after seizure

*ABCs=monitor airway, breathing, and circulation.*

may indicate rapidly progressing pathology. Many pathological conditions eventually affect these vital body functions, making them useful indicators of potentially serious pathology.

Next, evaluation of brainstem (smell, vision, facial sensation and movement, hearing, taste, speech, swallowing) and neurological function (reflexes, coordination, ataxia, balance, sensation) is conducted. The brain and nervous system, like the heart and lungs, are very sensitive to changes in the internal environment of