



Emergency Physicians Say "ICE" Can Help Save Your Life

Washington, DC—Emergency physicians are recommending that people with cellular phones add "ICE" entries into their cell phone address books. This stands for "In Case of Emergency," and medical professionals are using it to notify the person's emergency contacts and to obtain critical medical information when a patient arrives unconscious or unable to answer questions.

"People assume they will be able to communicate their medical history when they need emergency medical care, but when people are seriously ill or injured, that may not be the case," says ACEP president, Dr. Fredrick Blum. "Knowing which phone number to call to get vital information helps doctors and nurses to provide better and more effective care."

Medical providers, such as paramedics, nurses and doctors, are increasingly aware and looking for these entries in phone address books. By using the "ICE" designation first, they can immediately identify the appropriate number to call. It is recommended that people save at least two numbers and be sure that both people are familiar with their medical history. They can be saved as "ICE - 1" and "ICE - 2" or with names such as "ICE - Mom." In all cases, the "ICE" designation should come first.

"We recommend that patients continue to carry a summary of their medical histories in their wallets as well," said Dr. Blum. "Cell phones don't always work and having the information on your person is always a good idea."

ACEP advises people to remember the acronym "MAD" when deciding what to include in their medical histories:

- **Medicines** - list all current medications you are taking, including herbal and organic supplements because they can and do interact with some medications.
- **Allergies** - list all known allergies, especially to medications, but also to foods.
- **Doctors** - include the names and phone numbers of doctors (or medical providers) responsible for your regular care.

Neither "ICE" nor wallet-based information should be considered substitutes for medical alert bracelets and necklaces that also provide critical medical information.

"The more information we have about a person's medical background, the better," says Dr. Blum. "In emergency medicine we often do not have the benefit of knowing the patient's medical history."

ACEP is a national medical society with more than 23,000 members. ACEP is committed to advancing emergency care through continuing education, research, and public education. Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, ACEP has 53 chapters representing each state, as well as Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. A Government Services Chapter represents emergency physicians employed by military branches and other government agencies.