

The ID Card That Can Save Your Life



Heart attacks, car accidents, and other emergencies that leave you unconscious or in a state of shock make it impossible to communicate with health professionals. This is why carrying some sort of medical identification is so important. Three options to consider:

Medic Alert tags. These medical tags alert others to the fact that you have a medical condition that might deserve immediate attention. The tags are given for such conditions as epilepsy or diabetes. To obtain one, contact the MedicAlert Foundation International, 2323 Colorado Ave., Turlock, CA 95382, 1.888.633.4298 or www.medicalert.org.

Microfilm ID cards. Many hospitals give their patients special cards that contain a small piece of film called microfiche. The film contains extensive medical history information that you provide when the card is issued. During an emergency, the card is read with the use of a microfilm machine.

Nonmedical ID cards. Medical information can be written on a card that is provided by a variety of health organizations or one that is "homemade." Because there is no official record of this information, health professionals may be reluctant to use some of it.

Medical ID cards should include the following information.

- Name.
- Address.
- Phone number.
- Person to call in an emergency.
- Physician's name and phone number.
- Blood type.
- Allergies.
- Medical conditions.
- Required medication.
- Pharmacy name and phone number.
- Poison control phone number (1.800.222.1222).