

Responding to Student Health Concerns in Real Time

Emergency Response

Caltech's Emergency Preparedness Booklet provides campus protocols, resources, and key contacts. Community members are encouraged to review and keep it accessible. More details here: <https://emergencypreparedness.caltech.edu/Procedures>

Additional Institute guidance related to research emergencies and unusual events is outlined in IRB SOP 11.1.02 Responding to Medical Emergencies or Unusual Events which is available at: https://researchcompliance.caltech.edu/documents/26965/IRB_SOP_Responding_to_Medical_Emergencies_or_Unusual_Events_8.2025_FINAL.pdf

Student Support

Student Affairs guidance for urgent, time-sensitive support is available in the Orange Folder, which can be accessed and downloaded here: <https://studentaffairs.caltech.edu/orangefolder>

Student Medical Concerns

If you believe someone needs emergency medical attention, Caltech's Emergency Protocols start with an immediate activation of Campus Security by calling 626-395-5000 (x5000).

Caltech Security is available 24/7. They will assess the situation, transport students on or off campus, coordinate with emergency medical services, and arrange for help. If you believe an ambulance is needed, tell Campus Security. Describe what you are observing. They can make the call or confirm one is already enroute and help direct them to your location.

- Assign Roles and Responsibilities.
 - You do not need to manage this alone. Students, staff, and other faculty can assist — within their comfort level and training.
 - Do not leave the person alone until help arrives.
 - Consider designating someone to:
 - Move furniture or clear a safe space around the person
 - Stand posted at the door, elevator, or building entrance to direct emergency responders
 - Keep other students calm and away from the situation
- Ask those in the classroom and nearby:
 - "Is anyone here CPR (Cardiopulmonary resuscitation)-certified, a health aide, or an EMT?"
 - "Can someone bring in the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) and Stop the Bleed first aid kit (typically located with the AED)?"
 - Health advocates, trained students, or any individual with emergency training can help.

Tips for Specific Situations

Ongoing Loss of Consciousness -including fainting, not responding, suspected overdose

- Gently help the person to the ground if they are falling or unsteady
- Check if they are breathing
- Do not give food, drink, or anything by mouth
- Loosen tight clothing around the neck or chest
- Stay with them and keep watching closely
- If they are not breathing and you are trained, begin CPR and ask for help from someone who is CPR-trained
- Locate the AED and continue CPR until Campus Security or emergency responders arrive
- If you suspect an opioid overdose, let emergency responders know right away so naloxone (Narcan) can be used

Severe or Escalating Pain / Traumatic Injury

- Do not move the person if head, neck, or spinal injury is suspected
- Keep the area calm and clear of bystanders
- Help them remain as still and comfortable as possible
- Stay with them and reassure them until help arrives

Breathing Difficulty

- Watch for signs like trouble breathing, wheezing, gasping, or bluish lips or fingertips
- Stay calm and speak reassuringly
- Help them sit upright if possible (leaning slightly forward may help)
- Help them use their inhaler or EpiPen if they have one

Significant Blood Loss

- Apply firm, steady pressure using a clean cloth, towel, or clothing
- Keep pressure on the wound—try not to lift it repeatedly
- If bleeding is heavy from an arm or leg, keep applying pressure and call emergency services right away
- Do not try to remove anything that is stuck in a wound

Seizures

- Stay calm and note the time if possible
- Gently guide them to the floor if they are standing
- Move objects away so they cannot get hurt
- Place something soft under their head if available
- Do not hold them down or put anything in their mouth
- After the seizure stops, gently roll them onto their side
- Stay with them until they are awake and seem more oriented