

May 2009 Newsletter

First Responders by Doug Brown

It has been a long time coming but I think spring is finally here. The municipalities have started cleaning the roads and people are again outside preparing their lawns and gardens for this year's blooms. Along with the spring come many more people out and about including young children playing by roads. Please drive with care around residential areas and playgrounds.

A couple of the most called in requests for ambulance are shortness of breath and chest pain. We have had some people wait as much as a day or consider driving the patient to the hospital themselves. In all cases they said they did not want to bother anyone for such a small thing. I would like to say that this is not the right approach to take. Call BC Ambulance in all cases of chest pain or shortness of breath no matter what time of day. We the First Responders and BC Ambulance do not consider that any of these calls are bothering us unnecessarily. If you try to transport on your own then things change for the worse what can you do when you are driving?

We are a volunteer group that do what we do because we all care. It does not matter that we get called out at 3 or 4 in the morning in below freezing temperatures in a snowstorm. That is what we volunteered to do and none of us resent having to get up to help someone in need.

Heart Attack (Myocardial Infarction)

The first hour of a heart attack is known as the "golden hour." If you get help during that first hour, your chances of recovery are greatly improved. Yet many people hesitate to get help when they first experience symptoms. They're afraid of the embarrassment of going to the emergency room and finding that nothing is wrong. So, it is important that you know the symptoms that may indicate that a heart attack is in progress.

Many of the symptoms of heart attack can be brought on by digestive disturbances or other less serious conditions. But only sophisticated medical tests can determine for sure if you're having a heart attack. Heart attacks may vary from person to person, and from heart attack to heart attack. Women, for example, may experience "atypical" symptoms such as pain between the shoulder blades rather than crushing chest pain. This may result in them delaying seeking treatment. That is a great mistake.

Heart attack is one instance where getting treatment promptly can mean the difference between life and death. If you are in doubt, err on the side of being more cautious and call BC Ambulance go to the emergency and get yourself checked. We will try to describe some of the most common characteristics of heart attack in next month's column.

We are very much in need of some volunteers from the Tappen/Sunnybrea area. We are currently responding from the Blind Bay area and it takes a considerable amount of time to get there. If you live in the area or know someone who does please have them contact us about becoming a volunteer.

It is very difficult to find addresses in the dark. Our hope is that all homes will have one of our reflective signs mounted at the entrance to their driveway so precious minutes can be saved if we get a call to your home.

Contact Sherri at 250-833-2586 or Doug at 250-675-3920