

A decorative banner with a central rectangular box and two pointed ends, resembling a ribbon or scroll.

Interactive Dental Seminars
presents

LIABILITY ISSUES
SURROUNDING
MEDICAL EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS
IN
DENTISTRY

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-- Instructor --

**A Remote Learning Course
Available on YouTube**

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Credits

1

∞ LIABILITY ISSUES SURROUNDING ∞
MEDICAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN DENTISTRY

Your handout is composed of three parts...

- ✓ **Section 1** is a set of notes that follows the program.
- ✓ **Section 2** is a self-assessment tool to help you determine your office's strengths and weaknesses in the regard to medical emergency preparedness.
- ✓ **Section 3** is a form to claim your free 1 hour of dental continuing education.

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∞ LIABILITY ISSUES ∞

SURROUNDING

MEDICAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN DENTISTRY

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DISCLAIMER

This program is for general information purposes only. Dr. Sangrik is not an attorney. Information contained in the program should not be considered legal advice.

➤ Why Do People Litigate?

✓ **Plaintiff:** It's EMOTIONAL

- Rarity
- Severity
- Magnitude of Damage: Financial, Pain, Emotional

✓ **Attorney:** It's BUSINESS

- Is there a reasonable return on investment to justify accepting the case?

➤ What is a Medical Emergency in a Dental Office?

✓ **Definition:** Any time the dentist's attention is diverted from the dental procedure (or the associated anesthesia procedure) to attend to the patient's physiological or psychological needs.

✓ **Types**

- Errors by the dentist or dental team
- Reasonable sequela to dental treatment
- Random events

✓ **Frequency**

- Far more common than perceived
- At least once every two years

✓ **Risk Factors**

- Aging population
- Complex medical histories
- More sophisticated dental procedures
- Increased use of sedation
- Increase use of implants / dropped instruments

➤ What is Malpractice?

- ✓ **Duty:** legal obligation of mandatory conduct of performance
 - ✓ **Breach:** Failure to perform that which is expected
 - ✓ **Cause:** An action (or inaction) that precedes and brings about a result
 - ✓ **Damage:** A loss caused by one person to another
- } Must prove all four

➤ Reasonable Man Standard

- ✓ **Defined:** In absence of a statute, how a reasonable person would behave in a given situation.
- ✓ **Applied:** A dentist should be a first responder commensurate with their education

➤ Mitigation of Damage

- ✓ In any situation, all parties, even when not directly involved, have an obligation not to make a situation worse.

➤ What the Public Expects from Dental Offices in Regard to Medical Emergency Preparedness

✓ **Six Basic Tenets**

- Periodic training of the dentist beyond CPR
- Periodic training of the entire staff beyond CPR
- Periodic mock drills
- A written emergency plan to guide the team through the crisis and duty cards with pre-assigned tasks for each team member
- Basic medications
- Basic emergency equipment, specifically supplemental oxygen and an AED

✓ **Level of Commitment by the Public**

- 75% would be willing to pay more to insure a dental office is compliant
- Most believe their personal dentist is *already* compliant in all 6 areas
- 80% say they would take action if they learned their personal dentist was not in compliance with all 6 areas

➤ How to Prepare Your Office for a Medical Emergency

- ✓ Consider challenges of “Do-It-Yourself” approach versus Onsite Training

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MEDICAL EMERGENCY CHECKLIST

This self-assessment tool will measure your dental office's competency to manage a medical emergency in six key areas. Each section is of equal value and worth 50 points. To take this self-assessment, you will need all your medical emergency supplies (medications and equipment) and your office's last four years of CE records. The exercise takes about 10 minutes to complete and 5 minutes to score and interpret the results.

I. Dentist Training

Dentists should periodically re-train for medical emergencies. In this section there are two questions, each worth 25 points.

1) The American Heart Association recommends Basic Life Support for Healthcare Providers (BLS/HC) be retaken every two years. *Which statement best describes your office?*

Question 1 Points

- All* dentists in the office have current BLS/HC cards (25 pts)
- Some, *but not all*, dentists in the office have current BLS/HC cards (15 pts)
- Although no dentist has a current BLS/HC card, *all dentists* have taken the course in the last 4 years. (5 pts)
- At least one* dentist in the office has not taken BLS/HC within the last 4 years (0 pts)

2) Dentists also need to take a medical emergency preparedness courses that covers medical events other than cardiac arrest. *Which statement best describes your office?*

Question 2 Points

- All* dentists in the office have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years (25 pts)
- Some, *but not all*, dentists in the office have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years (15 pts)
- Although no dentist has taken a medical emergency course within the last two years, *all dentists* have taken a medical emergency course within the last 4 years (5 pts)
- At least one* dentist in the office has not taken a medical emergency course within the last 4 years (0 pts)

Tally your score for Section I:

____/50

II. Staff Training

All staff (hygienists, clinical assistants and business personnel) should receive periodic training to assist the dentist in the management of a medical emergency. There are six questions in this section.

Answer these questions 1 and 2 based exclusively on your dental hygiene staff

1) Which statement best describes your office's hygiene staff?

Question 1 Points

- All hygienists have a current BLS/HC card (9 pts)
- Some, but not all hygienists, have a current BLS/HC card (4 pts)
- Although all hygienists are not current in BLS/HC, all hygienists have taken BLS/HC within the last 4 years (2 pts)
- At least one hygienist has not taken BLS/HC within the last 4 years (0 pts)

2) Which statement best describes your office's hygiene staff?

Question 2 Points

- All hygienists in the office have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years. (9 pts)
- Some, but not all, hygienists in the office have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years. (4 pts)
- Although no hygienist has taken a medical emergency course within the last two years, all hygienists have taken a medical emergency course within the last 4 years. (2 pts)
- At least one hygienist in the office has not taken a medical emergency course within the last 4 years. (0 pts)

Answer these questions 3 and 4 based exclusively on your clinical (chairside) assistants.

3) Which statement best describes your office's clinical dental assistants?

Question 3 Points

- All clinical dental assistants have a current BLS/HC card (8 pts)
- Some, but not all, clinical dental assistants, have a current BLS/HC card (4 pts)
- Although all clinical dental assistants are not current in BLS/HC, all clinical dental assistants have taken BLS/HC within the last 4 years (2 pts)
- At least one clinical dental assistants has not taken BLS/HC within the last 4 years (0 pts)

4) Which statement best describes your office's clinical dental assistants?

Question 4 Points

- All clinical dental assistants in the office have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years. (8 pts)
- Some, but not all, clinical dental assistants in the office have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years. (4 pts)
- Although no clinical dental assistants have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years, all clinical dental assistants have taken a medical emergency course within the last 4 years. (2 pts)
- At least one clinical dental assistant in the office has not taken a medical emergency course within the last 4 years. (0 pts)

Answer these questions 5 and 6 based exclusively on your business (front office) staff.

5) Which statement best describes your office's business staff?

Question 5 Points

- All business staff have a current BLS/HC card (8 pts)
- Some, but not all, business staff, have a current BLS/HC card (4 pts)
- Although all business staff are not current in BLS/HC, all business staff have taken BLS/HC within the last 4 years (2 pts)
- At least one member of the business staff has not taken BLS/HC within the last 4 years (0 pts)

6) Which statement best describes your office's business staff?

Question 6 Points

- All business staff in the office have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years. (8 pts)
- Some, but not all, business staff in the office have taken a medical emergency course within the last two years. (4 pts)
- Although no business staff has taken a medical emergency course within the last two years, all business staff have taken a medical emergency course within the last 4 years. (2 pts)
- At least one member of the business staff in the office has not taken a medical emergency course within the last 4 years. (0 pts)

Tally your score for Section II:

____/50

III. Mock Drills

Periodically dental offices should hold brief, mock drills to practice their responses to a variety of medical events. There is one question in this section.

1) How often does your office hold mock medical emergency drills?

Question 1 Points

- Monthly (50 pts)
- 6 times a year (45 pts)
- 4 times a year (40 pts)
- 3 times a year (30 pts)
- 2 times a year (15 pts)
- Our office does not routinely hold medical emergency drills (0 pts)

Tally your score for Section III:

____/50

IV. Written Medical Emergency Plan

A dental office should maintain a written medical emergency plan to guide the team through a crisis. There are four questions in this section.

Section IV Points
Question 1 _____
Question 2 _____
Question 3 _____
Question 4 _____

- 1) Does your office have a written medical emergency plan with treatment algorithms to guide your team in the identification and response to a medical emergency? (25 pts for yes, 0 pts for no)
- 2) Have you personalized your written medical emergency plans for the unique needs of your office? [*You may answer "yes" if you developed your own emergency manual or if you purchased a commercial version and then personalized it. Answer "no" if you do not have an emergency manual.*] (5 pts for yes, 0 pts for no)
- 3) Does each member of your dental team have specific, pre-assigned tasks to accomplish during a medical emergency [e.g. retrieve oxygen tank, call 911, ect.]? (15 pts for yes, 0 pts for no)
- 4) Are these assignments posted in areas where they can be easily retrieved by the staff during a medical emergency? [Answer "no" if you answered "no" to question 3.] (5 pts for yes, 0 pts for no)

Tally your score for Section IV:

_____ /50

Section V: Medications

Dental offices should maintain a basic list of emergency medications. There are four questions in this section.

Section IV Points
Question 1 _____
Question 2 _____
Question 3 _____

1) Does your office have 3cc or 5cc medical syringes with needles for intramuscular injections? (4 pts for yes, 0 pts for no)

2) Does your office have 1cc tuberculin syringes with needles for sublingual injections? (4 pts for yes, 0 pts for no)

3) Use the following scoring system for the following six medications.

6 pts if the medication is in stock and within the expiration date

2 pts if the medication is in stock. Although the medication is expired, it is within three years of the expiration date *and* is not discolored (if liquid)

0 pts if the medication is out of stock, outdated by over 3 years or discolored.

- Genuine aspirin (not acetaminophen or ibuprofen)
- Albuterol inhaler
- Nitroglycerine tablets or inhaler
- Diphenhydramine (for injection, not tablets)
- Ammonia inhalants
- Glucose tablets and/or gel

4) Epinephrine is available in ampules or auto-injectors (Epi-Pens[®]). Choose one (A or B) of the following. *Do not take credit for both.*

A) If you stock epinephrine in **1:1000 ampules** use the following scoring system

- 6 pts if the medication is in stock and within the expiration date
- 2 pts if the medication is in stock. Although the medication is expired, it is within three years of the expiration date *and* is not discolored (if liquid)
- 0 pts if the medication is out of stock, outdated by over 3 years or discolored.

Question 4 Points

B) If you stock epinephrine in **Epi-Pens[®]** use the following scoring system

- 6 pts if you have 2 adult and 2 pediatric injectors and they are within the expiration date
- 2 pts if you have only 2 injectors (any combination) and they are within the expiration date
- 0 pts if you stock auto-injectors but they are out of date (*Read about importance of fresh Epi-pens in scoring section.*)

Tally score for Section V:

_____/50

VI. Equipment

Offices need to maintain basic emergency equipment to respond to a medical emergency. This section is divided into three sub-sections.

Monitors and Diagnostic Aids (10 pts total)

Monitor Subtotal

- Stethoscope (2 pts)
- Manual sphygmomanometers in at least three size cuffs (5 pts if you have all 3 sizes of cuffs, 2 pts if you only have only one size of cuff, 0 pts if your only means of taking a BP is with an automatic BP cuff designed for lay use [*they are not reliable at low BPs*])
- Glucose monitor with test strips (3 pts)

Oxygen and Respiratory Aids (3 pts each / 30 pts total)

Oxygen Subtotal

- Portable oxygen tank with regulator and oxygen
- A reserve source of oxygen (either a second tank or and N₂O unit)
- Nasal cannulae
- Rebreathing masks
- Oral pharyngeal airways in 7 sizes (award 1 pt if you only have 1 size)
- Pocket mask
- Bag-Valve-Mask (e.g. Ambu-bag[®])
- Oxygen Tubing
- Double-ended male adapters for oxygen tubing
- Equipment to perform a cricothyroidotomy

Cardiac Devices (10 pts total)

AED Subtotal

- AED (8 pts)
- AED battery is within its fully charged date (2 pts)

Tally for Section VI:

_____/50

Scoring

Section I	_____
Section II	_____
Section III	_____
Section IV	_____
Section V	_____
Section VI	_____
Grand Total	_____

Interpretation

General

285 or greater: Good job! Your office has high likelihood of successfully managing a medical emergency arising during dental treatment with confidence.

255-284: Pretty good. You have generally made a significant effort to prepare for a medical emergency but probably have a score of less than 40 in one or more section. Review each section and make improvements in the area(s) needed.

254 or lower: Significant deficiencies exist and your office has an increased likelihood of not providing optimal care during a medical emergency. Review each section and make improvements in the area(s) needed.

Specific Details (a minimum score of 40 pts is suggested in each section)

Section I: A score of less than 40 means at least one doctor in the office has not had BLS/HC and/or medical emergency training within the last 4 years. Because memory diminishes over time, this individual may not remember details to lead other members of the team during a medical emergency. Some dentists in the office would benefit from BLS/HC and/or a dental CE course on general medical emergencies.

Section II: A score of less than 40 means the entire team is not capable of assisting the doctor during a medical emergency. Some members would benefit from BLS/HC and/or a dental CE course on general medical emergencies.

Section III: There are 12 medical emergencies other than cardiac arrest for which dentists should prepare. If you are holding mock emergency drills less than every three months, it will take longer than 3 years to practice for all twelve. Consequently, the likelihood of a competent response is compromised.

Section IV: Two reach a minimal score of 40 points; two requirements need to be met: ① having a written medical emergency manual with algorithms and ② having pre-assigned tasks for each member of the dental team. Ideally, the manual should be personalized for the unique needs of the office and the staff assignments should be readily available to staff for use during an emergency.

Section V: A score of less than 40 means you either lack basic medications and/or have seriously outdated medications. In reality, most emergency medications are still potent for a *modest* time after their expiration date if they are not discolored. There are two exceptions to this generalization. ① The first is Epi-pens. Epi-pens rely on a small volume of compressed gas to propel the epinephrine through the needle. Because of the potential for leakage of the gas around the gasket over long periods of time, Epi-pens cannot be trusted to activate beyond their declared date. ② The expiration date issue is nitroglycerine tablets. Nitroglycerine tablets are packaged in airtight containers. Once opened and exposed to oxygen, nitroglycerine tablets degrade in 6 months, regardless of the expiration date on the container.

Section VI: The most common reason for having a score of less than 40 is failure to have adequate supplemental oxygen for both breathing and non-breathing patients. Curiously, many offices maintain supplemental oxygen for non-breathing patients but have no method to assist a breathing patient that would benefit from extra oxygen. In reality, a breathing patient needing supplemental oxygen is the most common situation a dentist may encounter.

Need to Improve Your Level of Preparation?

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LIABILITY ISSUES SURROUNDING MEDICAL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN DENTISTRY

You are eligible for one hour of continuing education credit nationally accepted by AGD/PACE. Complete the information below to receive your proof of participation.

Mail to: Interactive Dental Seminars, C/O: Larry J. Sangrik, DDS
401 South Street, Suite 3B1, Chardon, OH 44024

Allow 2 weeks for processing.

Part ①: Demographics

AGD No. (If Applicable):

Name: _____

Position: Dentist Hygienist Clinical assistant Business staff

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Your dental society: _____ N/A

Part ②: Current level of readiness

The handout contains an exercise that measures your level of current level of medical emergency preparedness.

COMPLETE IT AND ATTACH A COPY OF YOUR SCORE SHEET TO THIS FORM.

NOTE: THERE IS NO MINIMUM SCORE TO PASS. Answer *honestly*. Most offices have very low scores. You are merely required to complete the assessment, not achieve a specific value

Part ③: Answer these 4 questions

① The course referenced five risk factors regarding why medical emergencies during dental care are increasing in frequency, intensity and diversity. Which of the following is NOT a risk factor?

- Failure to use rubber dam by dentists
- Patients with increasingly complex medical histories
- Increasing use of sedation
- More sophisticated dental treatment

② The course explained four components of a malpractice lawsuit. How many must a plaintiff's attorney successfully prove to win a judgment?

- At least one
- Two of the four
- Three of the four
- All four

③ According to the research paper referenced in the course, what percentage of patients would take some form of action against their dentist if they learned their dentist's office was not prepared to address a medical emergency?

- 20% (about 1 in 5)
- 33% (about 1 in 3)
- 50% (about half)
- 80% (about 4 out of 5)

④ Because the business staff has no role during a medical emergency, they do not need to stay current in CPR (BLS).

- True
- False