

Quality Measures

Quality care guidelines are monitored by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), among others. CMS also publishes a summary of results showing how often California hospitals meet these standards. The results aren't posted for 12 - 18 months after a patient is discharged, however, so at EPHC we keep track of our own current practices. We'll share some of them with you on this page, choosing some of the most vital measures, and explaining why they're important. Then, we'll tell you how well we're doing. If there's something we can do better, we'll detail our improvement plan. Check back with us in a few months, and you'll be able to see if we've made our targeted improvements.

A **heart attack** (also called an acute myocardial infarction) happens when the arteries leading to the heart become blocked and the blood supply is slowed or stopped. When the heart muscle can't get the oxygen and nutrients it needs, the part of the heart tissue that is affected may die.

Symptoms of a heart attack can include:

- chest pain (often described as a crushing, squeezing, or burning pain in the center of the chest that may radiate to your arm or jaw)
- shortness of breath
- dizziness or faintness
- sweating
- nausea
- cold or clammy skin
- gray or very ill appearance

Sometimes there may be no symptoms, especially if you have diabetes. Women sometimes have different symptoms than men, such as a different kind of chest pain and/or abdominal pain.

ECG/EKG On Arrival

An electrocardiogram (ECG or EKG) is a test that helps doctors to determine whether a patient is having a heart attack.

National standards of medical care have been developed, which call for patients with chest pain or a possible heart attack to have an ECG upon arrival at the hospital--preferably within 10 minutes. Sometimes patients get an ECG done before they arrive (for example, by the ambulance staff). This is counted as "0 minutes."

At EPHC, the average number of minutes before patients with chest pain or possible heart attack got an ECG = 13 minutes. We've been as fast as within 1 minute and as slow as 16 minutes. Our hospital's goal is 15 minutes or less.

Our ambulance staff is equipped to perform EKG's in the field. In order to determine our average number of minutes (as noted above), EKG's performed in the field are counted as 0 minutes.

The national average for hospitals is: 8 minutes

The California state average for hospitals is: 9 minutes

Six months ago, we met our goal of 15 min. to EKG 100% of the time.

One year ago, we met our goal of 15 min to EKG 33% of the time.

The reason we have improved is: We talked to our staff, promoted heart health, and acquired technology to perform 12 lead EKG's in the field.

Heart Attack Patients Given Aspirin On Arrival

The heart is a muscle that gets oxygen through blood vessels. Sometimes blood clots can block these blood vessels, and the heart can't get enough oxygen. This can cause a heart attack. Chewing an aspirin as soon as symptoms of a heart attack begin may help reduce the severity of the attack.

EPHC currently administers aspirin upon arrival to potential heart attack patients 91% of the time.

In January 2011, we were administering aspirin upon arrival 100% of the time.

Here is what we're doing to bring our percentage back up to our goal of giving aspirin upon arrival 100% of the time: We continue to educate our doctors and staff regarding our quality expectations. We document our results and give regular feedback to our physicians and staff so they know how they're doing. Next quarter, we'll report back on this page so you can see if we've improved.

Nationally, aspirin is given on arrival to possible heart attack patient's 99% of the time.

California hospitals give aspirin on arrival an average of 99% of the time.