

Editorials

Universal Medical Identification Symbol

This is the universal Emergency medical symbol devised by the American Medical Association.

The person who displays it carries information which should be known to anyone helping him during an accident or sudden illness.

First announced in June, 1963, this symbol is already in such general use that it is essential that it be recognized by all emergency personnel who care for the ill or injured. It means, "Look for medical information that can protect life." Failure to recognize this symbol and to heed its vital message could be disastrous.



This symbol has been freely offered by the AMA to manufacturers and distributors of emergency medical signal devices and the publishers of medical identification cards. Thirty corporations and associations have adopted the universal symbol for use on their identifications and the number is increasing continuously. The AMA neither manufactures nor distributes signal devices.

Many signal devices of metal or plastic will bear this symbol on one side with a few words of vital information on the other. Other devices will have a pocket within which more detailed information can be found. Still others may consist of the symbol alone—a suggestion to look elsewhere in purse or pocket for important information or identification.

Fix this symbol in your memory—the star of life (or the asterisk of reference), bearing the snake entwined staff of Aesculapius, the mythical Roman god of medicine—taken from the seal of the American Medical Association, and all contained in a hexagon. This symbol may appear in any size or color. It is most likely to be found on the wrist or about the neck, though it may identify the presence of information in other locations.

Recognizing it as the universal symbol of emergency medical identification will help you to locate information that may protect life in an emergency.