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ICE could save your life

'In Case of Emergency' initiative turns cell phones into lifelines

By **Dawn Fratangelo**

Correspondent

NBC News

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Dawn Fratangelo
Correspondent

NEW YORK - At Montefiore Medical Center, New York City's busiest emergency room, information is vital, and sometimes hard to come by — like when a woman in cardiac arrest is brought in alone and unconscious.

"We were resuscitating this woman with no information," says Dr. Robert Meyer, "and only two hours later did someone show up."

News that she'd had chest pains for weeks came too late, but she was carrying a potential lifeline: a cell phone.

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That sort of situation is just what Robert Stimpson, the acting police chief in Madison, Conn., is thinking. Now he's launching a

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- **Turning cell phones into lifelines**
July 28: In this increasingly wire world, everyone seems to have a cell phone. NBC News' Dawn Fratangelo reports on an initiative that turns cell phones into lifelines in emergency situations.

Nightly News



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campaign that's catching on: asking cell phone users to create a specific entry called ICE, or "In Case of Emergency."

It couldn't be easier. Enter the number of your emergency contact into your cell phone's address book. Label it as ICE and store it. Paramedics or doctors can then access that number if you're in an accident.

"A program like ICE," says Stimpson, "would make our job much easier, save a lot of time, help the emergency provider, and ultimately, help the person in need."

Most of the 193 million cell phone users in the United States probably already have an "in case of emergency number." It just may be under something like "mom." Programming it again under "ICE" only takes moments.

There are some concerns, especially that the emergency contact be up to date about medical history.

The idea caught on after the bombings in Great Britain, where a paramedic conceived it. Word spread, and a grass-roots movement was under way — from the Internet to hospitals worldwide.

"It's a no-brainer," says Meyer, "It's a wonderful idea. It's cost-free."

It's three simple letters that could help save lives.

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