

FAQ MedicAlert

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES

1. WHY WOULD MEDICAL IDENTIFICATION SERVICE BE HELPFUL?

The goal of MedicAlert is to make a difference in the lives of children and youth with mental health challenges by ensuring that in an emergency / crisis, their mental health needs are addressed and information that is vital to them is accessible 24/7 to first responders and healthcare professionals.

In some cases, children or youth may not be able to communicate in a crisis, and medical identification service can communicate on the young persons behalf. For example, MedicAlert can contact key support people for them, and provide important information to emergency responders (i.e., medications, allergies, comfort measures) that would be supportive during times of crisis.

Some children and youth with mental health challenges have had scary or traumatic encounters with those trying to help in times of crisis. By providing emergency responders with more information about the child/youth's specific situation, they will be able to provide better support in times of distress. The MedicAlert service will ensure that children and youth will be protected even when the family travels abroad.

2. WHAT IS THE COST OF MEDICAL ALERT?

MedicAlert service costs \$5 per month for youth 18 years and older, or \$4 per month for children / youth under the age of 18. Children, youth and families can choose from many ID styles many are as low as \$39 for a bracelet, or if a shoe tag is more fitting to the needs, the price for one shoe tag is \$30. The MedicAlert service provides 24-hour coverage. MedicAlert is a not for profit organization, that wants to make sure that every child/youth is provided protection regardless of finances. No child/youth will be left uncovered. Please call 1-855-348-3353 to discuss your specific situation.

3. WHAT INFORMATION WOULD BE REQUIRED TO SHARE AND WHO WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THAT INFORMATION?

MedicAlert is entirely voluntary. It is up to the child/youth and family to decide how much information to share with MedicAlert, and the profile can be updated at any time. The information will be stored on the secure MedicAlert database and only be shared during a time of crisis with people who are actively taking care of the child/youth (911 personnel, hospital staff etc.).

4. WHAT IF MY CHILD OR YOUTH DOES NOT WANT TO WEAR THE BRACELET?

Some children and youth don't want to wear the bracelet because of stigma, sensory issues, or other reasons. They can still participate in the program! In addition to a bracelet, they can also consider this ID option (www.medicalert.ca/Products/White-Shoe-Tag) that has been used in a variety of ways – in shoes, bags, jackets, glasses etc. In addition, when people sign-up they get a MedicAlert wallet card. This

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wallet card can be distributed to those within their circle of care or those they may interact with on a daily basis, this would ensure that should the child/youth be in an emergency (and is not wearing an ID) someone would be able to relay their subscriber ID number or relevant information.

5. I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY CHILD OR YOUTH BEING BULLIED/TEASED / STIGMATIZED FOR WEARING THE MEDICALERT BRACELET.

Unfortunately, there can be stigma with having any medical health problem including, and sometimes more, a mental health challenge. We encourage discussions between children/youth and families and those on their team. While there may be a stigma associated with wearing a MedicAlert bracelet, the potential benefits of improved support during a crisis might outweigh the stigma. MedicAlert's team of medical profile specialists provide recommendations on what to engrave on the bracelet, to help ensure that first responders are able to make informed decisions to help children and youth during a crisis. However, the final decision on the engraving is up to the children, youth and family, and we would encourage you to talk with your child or youth about how they might respond to comments about the bracelet. It might also be helpful to talk to another parent or youth that has been in a similar situation to get their perspective. If this would be helpful, please call FamilySmart® at 1 (855) 887 8004 or the Kelty Centre at 1 800 665 1822.

6. WITH IT BEING A BRACELET, IT MEANS THAT RESPONDERS WOULD HAVE TO GET CLOSE TO A CHILD OR YOUTH TO GET THEIR INFORMATION OFF THE BRACELET. WHAT HAPPENS IF SOMEONE GETTING TOO CLOSE TRIGGERS A CHILD OR YOUTH MORE? THAT MIGHT BE INFORMATION THAT IS IN THE MEDICALERT FILE BUT IT MEANS THEY HAVE TO DO THE VERY THING THAT DOESN'T WORK FOR THE CHILD OR YOUTH.

Like any treatment, there are risks and benefits associated with wearing a MedicAlert bracelet. We would encourage you to discuss the risks and benefits of participating in the program with your child/youth and those treating the. However, even if emergency responders can't read the bracelet, there is reason to believe that they might approach the situation differently if they see a MedicAlert bracelet, which could enhance their response to children and youth. You can also distribute the wallet card to those who spend time with your child/youth. They can then read off the subscriber ID number from the card, even if the first responders can't get close enough to read the bracelet.

7. WHY IS THIS A PILOT?

MedicAlert has been providing coverage to people with medical concerns for over 55 years. More recently, they have been expanding their coverage to include people with autism, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and dementia. The goal of the pilot is to determine if children and youth with mental health challenges could benefit from this collaboration. If this pilot is successful (even if a small number of people participate), this will be scaled up to other mental health agencies across the country.

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8. IF THE PILOT ENDS, CAN MY CHILD STILL BE COVERED?

Yes – once you are enrolled in MedicAlert, you will be able to be covered for as long as you feel it is helpful.

9. MY CHILD HASN'T BEEN TREATED AT BCCH CAN THEY STILL PARTICIPATE?

Yes! Please call MedicAlert at 1 855 348 3353 to sign up!

10. MY CHILD WAS JUST DIAGNOSED AND I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO WRITE IN THEIR CARE PLAN. WHAT DO I DO?

Try to think of strategies that have been helpful in the past for your child/youth. Some ideas are who would your child/youth like to be contacted in a crisis? Are there certain medications that have been helpful or hurtful? Are there certain comfort measures that would help (i.e. give your child space, talking to your child, not talking to your child, etc.) What are instructions you would like to tell emergency responders if you were there?

FamilySmart® created a document with ideas for parents to consider putting into the care plan and, sometimes it is helpful to talk to parent or youth who has been in a similar situation. Please feel free to call FamilySmart® at 1 (855) 887 8004 or the Kelty Centre at 1 800 665 1822 to discuss your specific situation with a parent or youth with lived experience

11. WHAT HAPPENS IF THERE IS AN EMERGENCY AND MY CHILD'S MEDICALERT IS USED?

When the MedicAlert record has been accessed in an emergency, your child/youth's information will be provided to first responders and you as an emergency contact will be notified by phone. In addition, MedicAlert will contact the child/youth or family a few days after the incident by phone. The goal of this call will be to update the care plan (if there have been changes) and to gather qualitative feedback on the service.

12. HOW WILL YOU KNOW IF THE PILOT HAS BEEN A SUCCESS?

MedicAlert will connect with those children/youth/families who sign-up for this MedicAlert pilot and use qualitative measures to evaluate the program. People's experience of MedicAlert is important and their feedback will help to improve the services offered to children, youth and families with mental health challenges. Providing feedback on your experience of MedicAlert is entirely voluntary.