

# PFA Tips

## Calling 911 in a Crisis

**U**nder extreme stress and anxiety, our ability to cognitively process is diminished. It can be difficult to recall the most basic of information - your child's height/weight, what they are wearing that day, their triggers and coping mechanisms. It's important to practice what to say when it's time to place that 911 call for help and have helpful documentation filled out and easily accessible prior to a crisis.

### Call 911 IMMEDIATELY

If your loved one is demonstrating behaviors that could be dangerous for themselves or others, do not wait to call 911.

### Remain calm

Easier said than done. This is where practicing during a non-crisis time what you might say on a call will be helpful. 911 call takers need to be able to understand your call in order to dispatch the appropriate personnel. Officers will be more able to listen to and assist you if you are calm and in control.

### Be an advocate

Provide the call taker and responding officers the diagnosis of your loved one. Be prepared to describe your loved one's triggers, coping strategies, passions, and preferred method of communication.

### Be clear about your needs

Focus on the critical information you need to provide the 911 call taker and the arriving officers. Explain what type of assistance you need in order to help your loved one. Do you only need time? Space? Support?

### Identify threats

If there is a threat (the individual has a weapon, or is threatening to hurt himself or others), please let officers know. The more information officers have when responding, the better they will be equipped to provide an effective/safe outcome.

### Assign roles to family members

Make sure all family household members from siblings to grandparents have a "mental mindset" of their roles in a crisis. All members of the household should feel comfortable calling 911 and should know what to say and ask for.

### Calling 911 about a Critical Missing Person

#### Call 911 IMMEDIATELY

If your child or loved one is missing, the longer you wait to call 911, the greater the headstart your child has.

#### Prepare BEFORE your loved one goes missing

It is best to fill out a First Responder Form and keep multiple copies on hand as more than one responder may request a copy. <https://bit.ly/39mrj2h>. Elopement behavior can begin at any age. Just because your child has never eloped before, does not mean your child will not at some point. For more information on preventive strategies for wandering and elopement, please read "PFA Tips: When They Wander or Run Away" at <https://bit.ly/2KZK3eU>.

#### Be as accurate as possible

Be truthful to the police regarding how long your child has been missing as this changes the search radius.



### Offer clues if your child has eloped in the past

- Does your child have a favorite or typical place where they go? (Or has expressed a desire to go?)
- What are your child's triggers, fears and passions? Include specific resources used by search teams – K9s, helicopter, police, police cars, etc.
- Will your child respond to their name?
- Do they have any form of identification on them?
- Do they have sensory issues? What about tolerance for lights, sounds, touch?

### NextGen911

#### What is NextGen911?

NextGen911 is a major upgrade to 911, allowing voice, text, data, images, and video. It also has improved location accuracy, especially for mobile callers. Because it is new, some services may be available before others and different services may be available in different parts of the country at different times.

**Calling 911 in a Crisis** – cont.Proud Sponsor of  
PFA Resource Center**Text to 911**

Call if you can, text if you can't. Use Text to 911 if you are in a situation where it is unsafe to place a voice call to 911 or you are experiencing a medical emergency and may be unable to speak. Note the following limitations: texting may take longer, pictures/videos and emojis cannot be sent over text and if you include another contact on your text to 911 it may not be received by 911.

**Sending pictures and video to 911**

This feature is not available in all locations yet. It is not a video chat with the 911 call-taker (no Facetime/zoom/etc.). The dispatcher will need to send you a link to upload a photo/video or take a picture/video.

**Better location accuracy**

NextGen911 uses multiple data sets to tell 911 where you are. It can even detect what floor of a building you are on. Make sure you have your Location Services turned on.

**Why does a NextGen911 call feel so long?**

NextGen 911 incorporates a protocol questioning system. It is designed to gather needed information and ensure you get the RIGHT help. It can feel like a lot of questions. STAY CALM. Your call is typically being dispatched by someone else while you are answering questions. The amount of time on the phone always feels longer than what it is.

**What3Words****What is What3Words?**

A geolocation system that divides the entire surface of the Earth into a grid of 10'x10' squares. Each square is assigned a unique combination of three words example: *apple.orange.chair*. This makes it easy for someone to describe their exact location anywhere in the world — even if there's no street address.

**Why it helps**

It is a free app that is being used by 911. It is especially critical for emergencies that happen in places without addresses: hiking trails, highways, parks, large buildings, rural areas. It can work anywhere in the world and still works offline. What3Words is precise, giving an accurate location within 10 feet.

**WHAT3WORDS****Additional Resources**

Top 10 Tips for Calling 911 from NENA The 911 Association  
<https://www.nena.org/page/911tipsguidelines>

Making 911 Work for You from APCO, NENA and CTIA  
<https://pathfindersforautism.org/articles/safety/calling-911-crisis/>

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# STATE OF MARYLAND TEXT-TO-911 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## ABOUT TEXT-TO-911 SERVICE

### **Q: What is text-to-911?**

**A:** Text-to-911 is the ability to send a text message from your mobile phone to 911 in the event you are unable to place a phone call.

### **Q: Can I text 911?**

**A:** Text-to-911 is not available everywhere and may not be available when roaming. In the state of Maryland, text-to-911 is available statewide with AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, and Verizon. To text 911, you must be enrolled in your carrier's text or data plan. If text-to-911 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you should receive a message letting you know to contact 911 by other means.

### **Q: When should I text 911?**

**A:** Text-to-911 is intended for use in three primary scenarios:

1. For individuals who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or have a speech disability
2. For someone who is in a situation where it is unsafe to place a voice call to 911
3. For an individual who is experiencing a medical emergency and may be unable to speak

You should only text 911 in an emergency. Prank-texters can be identified and prosecuted according to local laws and regulations.

**9-1-1**  
CALL IF YOU CAN  
TEXT IF YOU CAN'T

### **Q: What are the challenges with text-to-911 service?**

**A:** As with all text messages, texts to 911 may take longer to receive and respond than a voice call. Texts also do not provide the location of the texter, and could be received out of order or may not be received at all. Additional challenges include:

- Pictures and/or videos cannot be received by 911 via text
- If you include another contact on your text to 911 it may not be received by 911
- The preferred text language for texting 911 is English, however some limited translation services may be available

### **TEXT-TO-911 TIPS**

#### **Q: How do I text 911?**

**A:** Follow these steps to text 911 in an emergency:

1. Enter 911 into the “To” field of a new message
2. Your first text should be short and include the location of the emergency and the type of service needed – police, fire, or ambulance
3. Press the send button
4. Answer questions from the 911 specialist and follow the instructions he or she provides
5. Text in simple words; do not use abbreviations or slang
6. Keep messages short

#### **Q: How do I know that 911 has received my text?**

**A:** If your text has been received, a 911 specialist should respond to your text. If text-to-911 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you should receive a message from your wireless carrier letting you know that you must place a voice or relay call to 911.

#### **Q: Is there a charge for using text-to-911 service?**

**A:** Standard text messaging rates apply.

**9-1-1**  
**CALL IF YOU CAN**  
**TEXT IF YOU CAN'T**

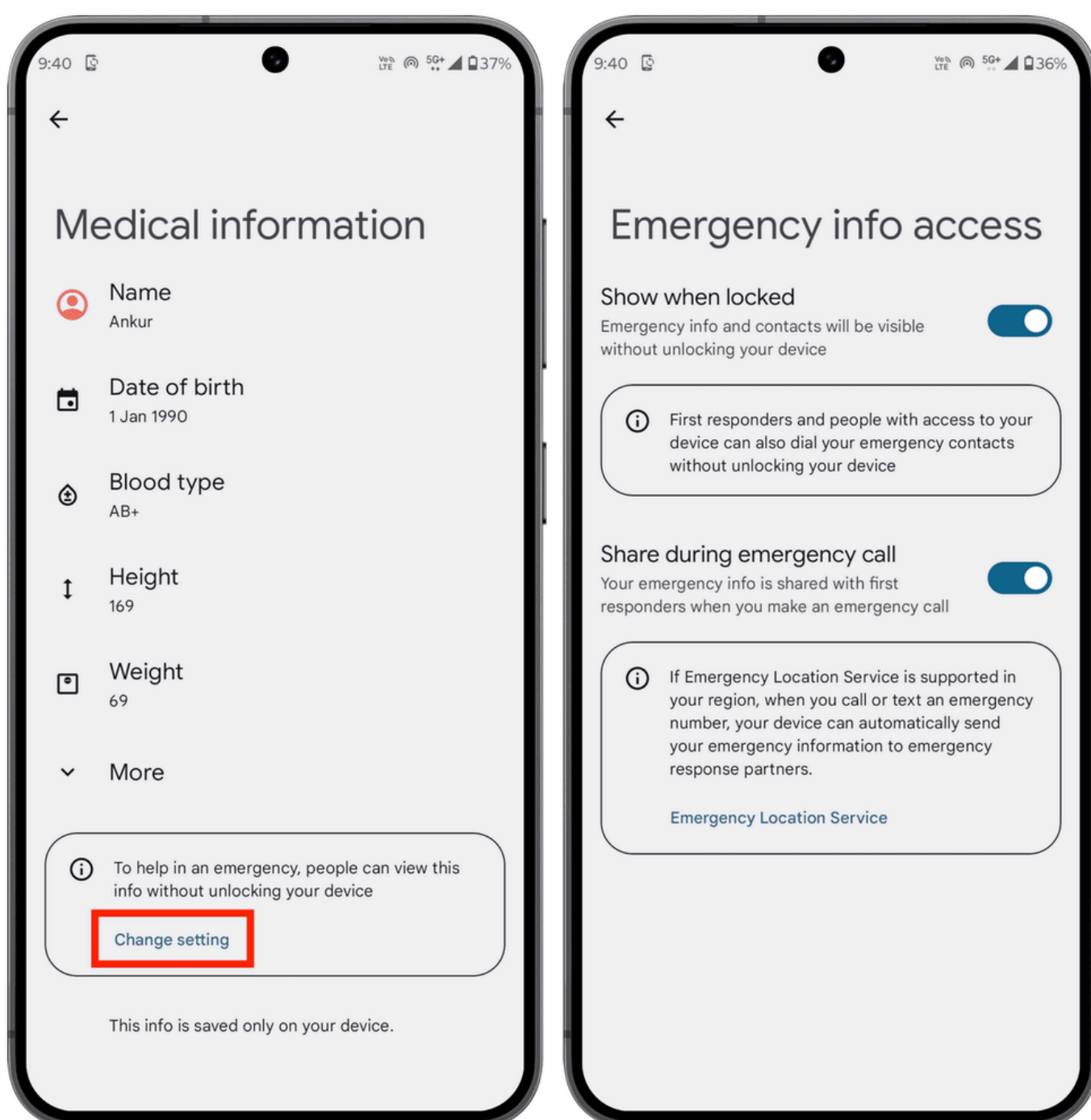
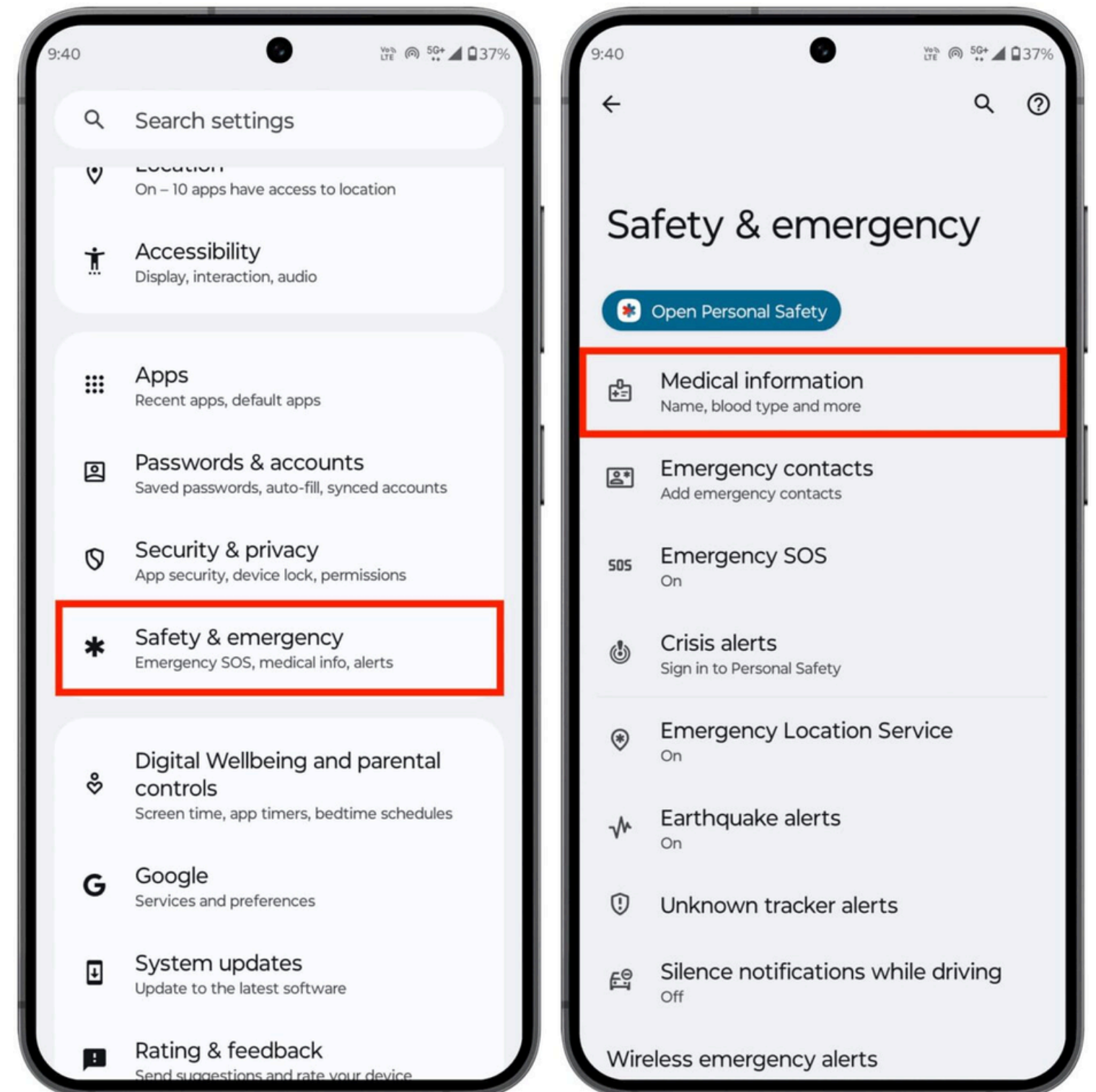
# Set up your Medical ID

MAKE SURE 911 & FIRST RESPONDERS CAN ACCESS YOUR VITAL HEALTH INFORMATION

**1** Open Settings or download the Google *Personal Safety* App on your Android

**2** Click Medical Information and choose MORE for additional options

**3** Fill out as much information as possible



Enabling the “Show When Locked” feature allows first responders to access your Medical ID without unlocking your phone if you’re unable to communicate.

After completing your Medical Info, tap the “Change Setting” button and make sure “Share during emergency call” is toggled ON

- ✓ Keep your information up to date!
- 🔄 Review your Medical ID anytime your health or contacts change.



## Set up your Medical ID

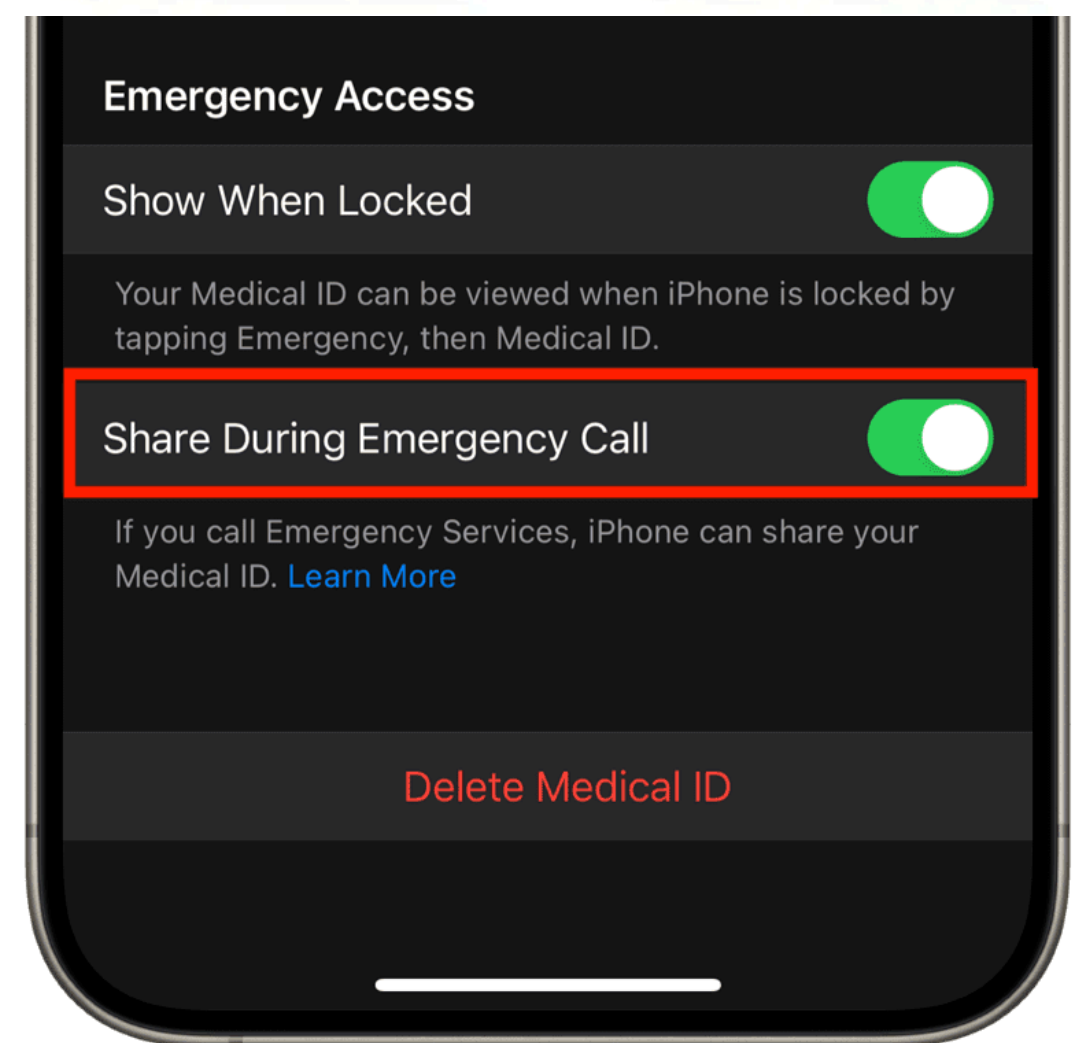
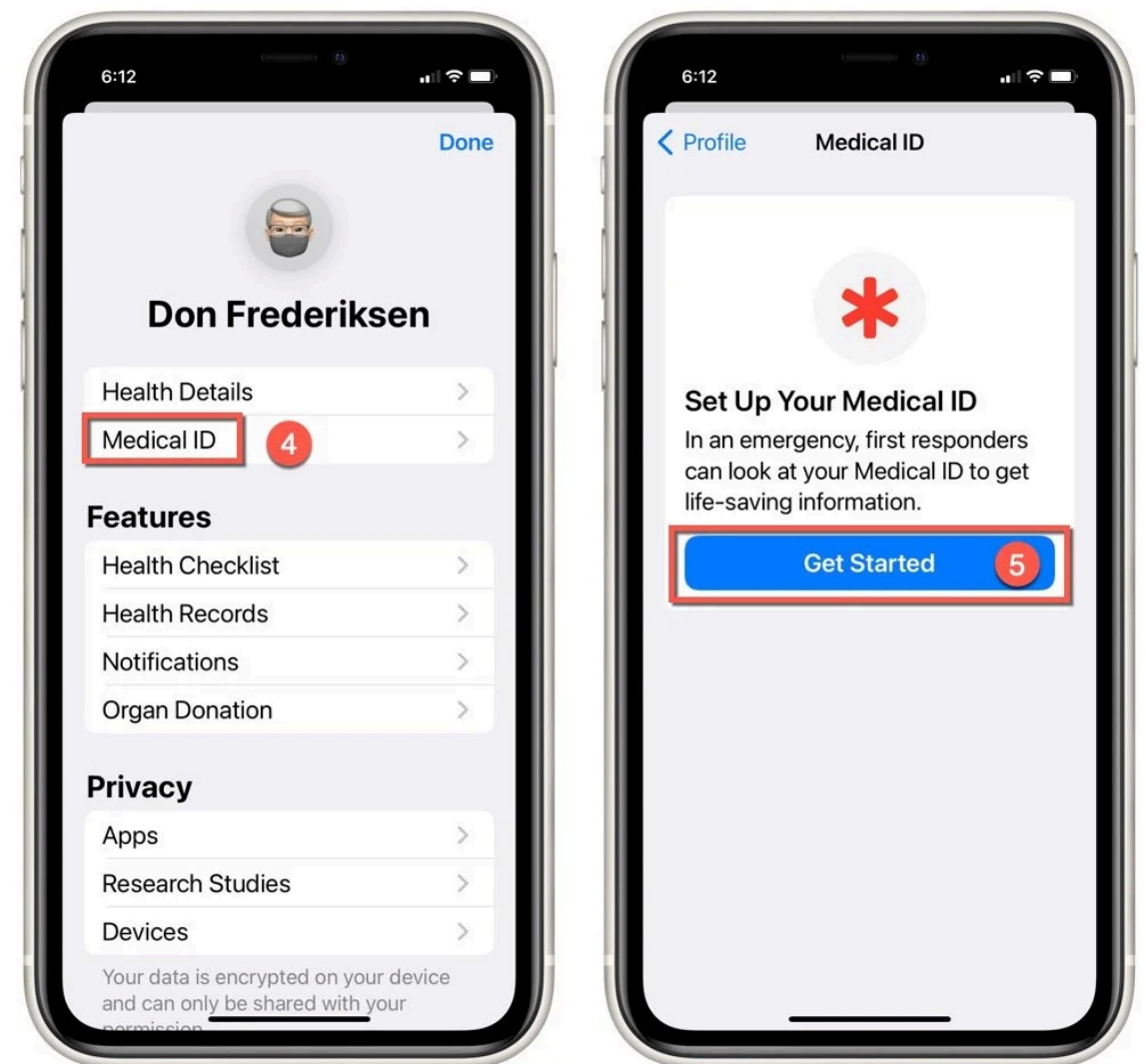
MAKE SURE 911 & FIRST RESPONDERS CAN ACCESS YOUR VITAL HEALTH INFORMATION

**1** Open the HEALTH App on your iPhone

**2** Tap your account profile image in the top right corner

**3** Select Medical ID

**4** Select *GET STARTED* or *EDIT* in the top right corner



Make sure to toggle on **SHARE DURING EMERGENCY CALL**  
This allows your information to be forwarded to 911 during an emergency call



Enabling the "Show When Locked" feature allows first responders to access your Medical ID without unlocking your phone if you're unable to communicate.

- ✓ Keep your information up to date!
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