



Focus On Health

Community Medical Centers is proud to sponsor *Focus on Health*, a medical information radio series from the UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program: growing Valley doctors.

FAQ: Level 1 Trauma & The Table Mountain Rancheria Level 1 Trauma Center

Medical Specialist:

Dr. Jim Davis, Professor of Clinical Surgery, UCSF Fresno & Chief of Trauma, Community Regional Medical Center

Q. Why should the community care about trauma?

- A. Trauma is the leading cause of death for everybody under age 45, it is the leading cause of death for children and young adults and is the 3rd leading cause of death for those 45-65.

For every person that's injured, three are permanently disabled. The way to think about that in everyday terms is one in three people are likely to be taken to the hospital in an ambulance for injury sometime in their life. If it hasn't happened to you or someone you love, it almost certainly will.

Q. What sort of accidents/injuries would classify a case as trauma?

- A. Trauma is injury. The most common injuries are usually motor vehicle related; car crashes, motorcycle crashes and auto versus pedestrian incidents. Inter-personal violence like stabbings and gunshot wounds are also trauma.

At the Table Mountain Rancheria Level 1 Trauma Center injury caused by motor vehicle crash makes up about 70% of the injuries treated. Additionally, between 15% and 24% of the injuries are caused by penetrating trauma, such as stabbings and shootings.

Q. Why should the community care about having a Level 1 Trauma Center right here in the Central Valley?

- A. Outcome after injury is significantly better at a trauma center than a non-trauma center hospital. People have a better functional recovery if they go to a trauma center. The next Level 1 trauma center to the south is in Los Angeles County and to the north is either in Stanford, San Francisco or UC Davis. Time to definitive

treatment after trauma can make the difference between life and death. Having a trauma center close by matters.

Q. What classifies a facility as a Level 1 Trauma Center?

- A. To classify a facility as a Level 1 Trauma Center, the facility must fulfill a variety of requirements. First and foremost, it requires a tremendous level of commitment on the part of the institution.

A trauma center must have full surgical capability (OR crew, surgeon, anesthesia services) on duty 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The operating room has to be ready to go at a moments notice. The emergency department must be fully staffed and equipped and a full complement of specialists must be available on call.

Q. What is the difference between a Trauma Center and an Emergency Room?

- A. The difference between a trauma center and an emergency room is night and day. The doctors on duty in smaller facilities may be physicians who aren't really specialists in emergency medicine, but rather a physician who trained in family medicine and are covering Emergency Room duties. In the surrounding San Joaquin Valley, most hospitals don't have general surgeons, cardiac surgeons or neurosurgeons on call. So if a patient with a major injury has gone to an emergency room at one of these smaller community hospitals, the first instrument they are going to pick up is the telephone to transfer that patient to a major trauma center.

Q. If a person who was seriously injured went to the trauma center, what process would they go through? Would they be taken care of immediately or would they have to wait in the emergency department waiting room?

- A. A trauma center can provide immediate, life saving care for people that are gravely injured from hemorrhage or head injury or any other significant injury. After resuscitation and evaluation with state-of-the-art diagnostic equipment, if immediate surgery is needed, the patient can be in the operating room within about 15 minutes of arrival.

Patients who come into a trauma center with a minor injury like a sprained ankle will not necessarily be seen right away because the most severely injured patients have to be cared for first.

Q. Where can a person go to get more information about the Table Mountain Rancheria Level 1 Trauma Center?

- A. Visit the Community Medical Centers website at www.communitymedical.org.

Sponsored by:

