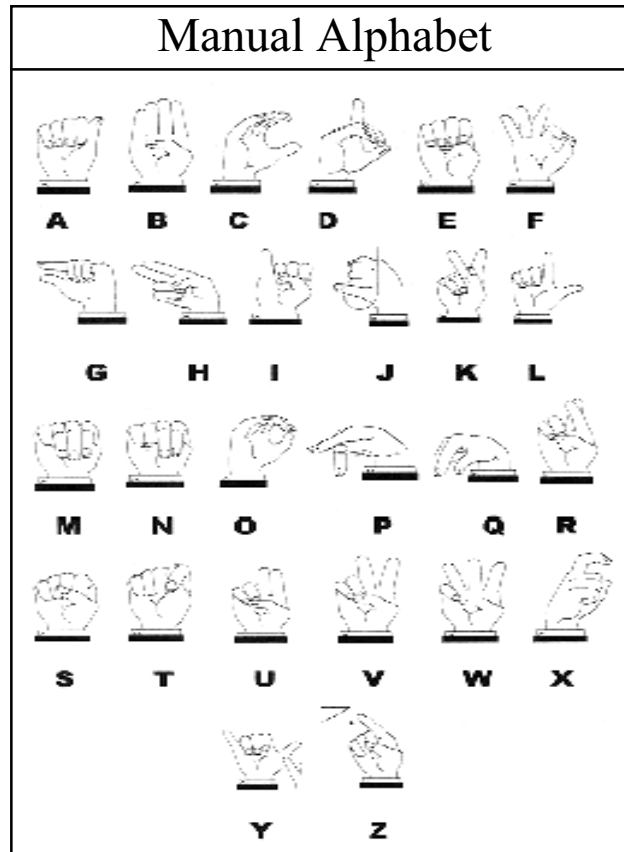


Helping Hands: Health & Survival Signs

You're on the scene of a house fire, a car accident, or other emergency situation. How do you respond when the person involved is deaf? This handout illustrates basic sign language centering on a health and survival theme. A good beginning is to learn the manual alphabet and the following signs. You could be instrumental in saving a life by being able to communicate.



- * The manual alphabet is used for technical terms, proper names, and words that have no signs.
- * You can sign left or right handed. Select a dominant hand.
- * The letter hand positions are often used to describe a hand position for an individual word; i.e., the "D" hand position is used to make the doctor sign.

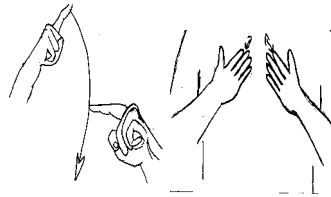
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Ambulance

The right hand, with fingers extended, is placed above the head to the right and rotated in a small circular fashion imitating a flashing emergency light.



Can't Breathe

Two signs: Can't—Bring the extended right index finger down in front of the chest hitting the extended left index finger as it passes (both palms down). Breathe—With both open hands in front of the chest, one hand above the other and fingers pointing in opposite directions, move the hands forward and back toward the chest with a slow repeated movement.

Child/Children



The right hand, palm down, is extended before the body, as if resting on a child's head. A series of movements, left to right, indicates the number of children.



Deaf

The tip of the right index finger touches the ear and then the closed lips.



Doctor

Tap the fingertips of the "D" hand (for doctor) or the "M" hand (for M.D.) palm facing down, on the wrist of the open left hand held in front of the chest, palm up.



Fire

While wiggling the fingers of both open hands, palms facing in, alternately move the hands in upward circles in front of each side of the chest.



Firefighter

The right “B” hand, palm out, is placed high on the forehead.



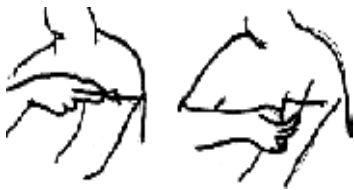
Heart Attack

Two signs: Heart—Using both index fingers, outline a heart over your heart. Attack—The “S” hand hits the palm of the left hand.



Help

With the little-finger side of the left “A” hand, palm facing in, on the palm of the open right hand, the right hand pushes up the left hand.



Hospital

The index and middle fingers of the right “H” hand trace a cross on the upper part of the left arm.



Hurt/Pain

Move the extended index fingers of both hands toward each other in front of the chest with a short repeated movement, palms facing in.



Kid

With the index and little fingers of the right hand extended under the nose, palm facing down, twist the right hand up and down with a small repeated movement.



Need

The right hand, palm down in a fist, with the right index finger extended and bent, moves up and down forcefully once or twice.



Police

Tap the thumb side of the right “C” hand on the left side of the chest, palm facing left.



Poison

Cross both pointer fingers into an “X” in front of the chin.



Sick

Touch the bent middle finger of the right open hand to the forehead while touching the bent middle finger of the left open hand to the lower chest.



Telephone

Mime holding a telephone by bringing the knuckles of the right “Y” hand to near the right ear.

References:

Costello, Elaine, *Signing: How to Speak with Your Hands*, Bantam Books, September 1995.

Sternberg, Martin L.A., *American Sign Language Dictionary*, HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1994. (Also available on CD-ROM.)

For more information on deafness and deaf culture, please contact:

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