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New protocol for Santa Clara County Paramedics will help save lives *9-1-1 patients to receive therapeutic cooling treatment after cardiac arrest*

SANTA CLARA COUNTY, CA. Paramedics in Santa Clara County will soon be using a potentially life-saving new treatment protocol that will help people who have suffered heart attacks by reducing damage to patients' brains. The new protocol, effective February 2, 2012, will use therapeutic cooling, which is a way of cooling the body from the inside out to help protect brain cells from dying. Brain cell death can cause serious neurologic injury, or even death.

"Clinically induced hypothermia can improve the neurologic outcome of unconscious patients following sudden cardiac arrest," said Dr. Eric Rudnick, MD, Santa Clara County Emergency Medical Services System Medical Director. "Normal body temperature is 98.6, and this treatment cools the body to 90 to 93 degrees to stop cell death." The process helps prevent such damage, and it helps the patient's brain heal and recover from the lack of oxygen.

Paramedics have been receiving County-mandated training in the new protocol since September. "This new treatment, and others that are being implemented in Santa Clara County, will simply save lives and allow our paramedics to provide better patient care," said Michael Petrie, Director of the Santa Clara County EMS System.

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