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*“ Life is short, and Art long;
the crisis fleeting;
experience perilous,
and decision difficult. “*

Hippocrates

Trauma Centers: What do the different levels mean?

Hospitals that are deemed Trauma Centers are categorized as Level I, Level II, or Level III.

Level I: All trauma specialists are available in the hospital 24 hours per day. This includes emergency doctors, surgeons, surgeon specialist, nurses and all other ancillary services. Level I must also have a resident/teaching program.

There are no Level I Trauma centers in Montana. The nearest Level I center is Harborview Medical Center in Seattle, Washington.

Level II: Must have a general/trauma surgeon available at all times, ensuring that there is always a surgeon available for all incoming trauma patients. The responding surgeon must respond within a 15 minute time frame.

There are four Level II Trauma Centers in Montana: St. Patrick Hospital, Missoula; Billings Clinic Hospital and St. Vincent Hospital, Billings; and Benefis Healthcare, Great Falls.

Level III: This type of trauma center does not require that another surgeon be available if the surgeon on call is taking care of someone.... meaning there may be only one surgeon available for trauma at any given time. Response time is 30 minutes for the surgeon to be available for incoming trauma patient.

There are two Level III Trauma Centers in Montana: Community Medical Center, Missoula and Bozeman Deaconess Hospital, Bozeman. Kalispell Regional Medical Center is in the process of being approved for Level III Trauma Center.

Makers of Oxycontin & executives fined \$634.5 million:

Purdue Pharma L.P., the maker of OxyContin and three of its' executives were ordered on 07/20/07 to pay a \$634.5 million fine for misleading the public about the risk of addiction associated with OxyContin. Designed as an oral medication, digested over a 12 hr period, the medication can produce a heroin-like high if crushed and then swallowed, snorted or injected. From 1996-2001 the number of oxycodone-related deaths nationwide increased five-fold while annual number of OxyContin prescriptions increased nearly 20-fold (report by U.S. Drug Enforcement Admin.) In 2002, the DEA reported OxyContin caused 146 deaths and contributed to another 318. In 2004, four deaths in Libby, Montana were linked to Oxycontin. In Missoula, Montana one OxyContin pill sells on the street for about \$100.00. There is one Board Certified Pain Medicine doctor in Montana that I know *will not* prescribe OxyContin.

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Your thoughts and comments are welcome!