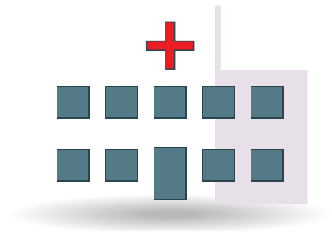


Immediate Medical Care: ER or Other Options?

When you need immediate medical care, the first line of advice has traditionally been, “Go to the nearest emergency room.” But is that advice the best course of action? With visits to the ER at an all-time high, wait times have skyrocketed. And emergency room treatments for non-emergency medical conditions contribute to the rising cost of our healthcare. So what are other care settings, and how do you determine which is best?



Alternatives to ER Care

Unless it's a true emergency, you'll likely get quicker medical care at other care settings such as an urgent care center, retail health clinic or walk-in doctor's office. Use these options, where available, when you need medical care quickly, but can't see your regular doctor. These conveniently located, licensed and accredited care settings are staffed with doctors, nurses and physician's assistants. So you'll get quality care, and you'll often pay much less than you would for emergency care.

Urgent Care Center

These clinics can usually handle problems that need immediate attention but aren't life-threatening or emergencies, like stitches, sprains and x-rays

Retail Health Clinic

Many major pharmacies and retail stores now have these walk-in clinics staffed by medical professionals. Go there when you need convenient, routine care, like for coughs and flu shots.

Walk-in doctor's office

These clinics can usually handle problems that need immediate attention but aren't life-threatening or emergencies, like stitches, sprains and x-rays

Your health plan also has a 24/7 nurse line that you can call for assistance in determining the severity of your symptoms and where to go for care. 1-877-789-2583



Plan Ahead

It's important that you understand your options before you need them.

Immediate Medical Care: ER or Other Options?

Where Should I Go?

Here are some general rules on the options you have for some common health problems. This is not a complete list, and if you are having a true emergency you should utilize the emergency room. **This list should be used as a rule of thumb.**

	Retail health clinic	Walk-in doctor's office	Urgent care center	Emergency Room
Animal bites			✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden or unexplained loss of consciousness • Signs of a heart attack, such as sudden/severe chest pain or pressure • Signs of a stroke, such as numbness of the face, arm of leg on one side of the body; difficulty talking; sudden loss of vision • Severe shortness of breath • High fever with stiff neck, mental confusion and/or difficulty breathing • Coughing up or vomiting blood • Cut or wound that won't stop bleeding • Possible broken bones • Poisoning • Stab wounds • Sudden, severe abdominal pain • Trauma to the head • Suicidal feelings • Partial or total amputation of a limb
Stitches			✓	
X-ray			✓	
Back pain		✓	✓	
Mild asthma		✓	✓	
Minor headache		✓	✓	
Sprain, strain		✓	✓	
Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea		✓	✓	
Bumps, cuts, scrapes	✓	✓	✓	
Burning with urination	✓	✓	✓	
Cough, sore throat	✓	✓	✓	
Ear or sinus pain	✓	✓	✓	
Eye swelling, irritation, redness or pain	✓	✓	✓	
Minor allergic reaction	✓	✓	✓	
Minor fever, colds	✓	✓	✓	
Rash, minor bumps	✓	✓	✓	
Vaccination	✓	✓	✓	