

Urgent Care vs. ER

Knowing your best option when you need same-day health care services can save you time, worry and unnecessary expenses.

If you've ever spent time in an emergency room, you know that flu season can mean hours waiting with crowds of people suffering from the annual bug, as well as those with illnesses and injuries that may be better treated in an urgent care center (UCC).

For non-life-threatening situations

Urgent care centers are convenient, economical and staffed by physicians. Benefits of urgent care centers include:

- After-hours care
- No appointment required
- Typically shorter wait times
- Ability to save money

With the right information, you can make sure you and your loved ones get the best care in the most appropriate setting, whether you have a serious illness or injury, or just a case of the sniffles. The guidelines at the bottom of this flyer can help you make the right choice when you need same-day health care services.



Urgent care centers

- Cough, sore throat, respiratory infections
- Earaches
- Back pain, body aches
- Burning with urination
- Colds, sinus infections, allergies
- Eye irritation, swelling or pain
- Sprains, muscle strains
- Rashes, minor cuts, scrapes, wounds
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Animal bites

Emergency rooms

- Any life-threatening or disabling condition
- Injury, with loss of consciousness or fainting
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Sudden numbness of limbs or face, difficulty speaking
- Severe shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Sudden, severe chest pain or pressure
- Major injuries, vehicle accidents, stab wounds
- Poisoning
- Sudden, severe abdominal pain
- Vomiting blood

(continued)



If you feel that you are experiencing an emergency, call 911 immediately or go to the nearest ER.

Not sure what to do?
Call our Nurse Advice Line.

A registered nurse is available to answer your questions – any time, day or night at 1-800-893-5597.

Conditions and where to go

An urgent care center can treat many common conditions, while others are more appropriately treated in the emergency room. Before you go, contact your local UCC and ask about its services.

After visiting either the emergency room or urgent care center, be sure to contact your primary doctor so they can coordinate your follow-up care.

Note: Please consult your *Evidence of Coverage (EOC)* or *Certificate of Insurance (COI)* for more information about accessing emergency rooms and urgent care centers in your area, as well as any copayments that may be associated with your care.

This information is intended for educational purposes only and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your physician for advice about changes that may affect your health.

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FLY056238ELOO (1/22)