

When you are sick or have an injury, deciding where to go to receive care can be confusing. While the Emergency Room (ER) is one option, there may be less expensive, more convenient options that would be appropriate for your situation. It is sometimes unclear as to what is a true emergency and what is not. Most doctors would agree on a short list of problems that should always be treated as emergencies. Being prepared and knowing what resources are available will help you decide on the best treatment option.

Take Action Today

-  Get a primary care physician who knows your medical history and is available to see you when you are not well. When you visit the ER, you are seeing a doctor who does not know your history. This can result in unnecessary and expensive tests and scans to determine the cause of your problem.
-  Find out what other options are available in your area for health care, such as 24-hour walk-in clinics. These facilities can care for non-urgent conditions faster and for less money than a hospital ER.
-  Keep important medical information with you. This includes the name and telephone number of your regular doctor, a list of any allergies or medical conditions you may have, and a list of any medications you may be taking and the dosage.
-  Know what it cost to receive care and how your insurance will cover the costs. It will cost a lot more out of your pocket to go to the ER than it would at your doctor's office or urgent care clinic. Most physician or urgent care clinic co-pays range from \$25 to \$40 versus a \$150 to \$300 co-pay for an ER visit.

WHEN SHOULD YOU GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM?

If you have a serious condition – stroke, heart attack, severe bleeding, head injury or other major trauma – go straight to the nearest ER. Don't take a chance with anything life-threatening. The ER is the best place for these and other critical conditions, including:

- + Chest pain**
- + Difficulty breathing**
- + Severe bleeding or head trauma**
- + Loss of consciousness**
- + Sudden loss of vision or blurred vision**

ALTERNATIVES TO THE HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM

	Drugstore Clinic	Doctor's Office	Urgent Care
Animal bites			X
Allergic reaction, minor	X	X	X
Asthma, mild		X	X
Back pain		X	X
Bumps, cuts, scrapes	X	X	X
Sunburn or minor burn	X	X	X
Burning with urination	X	X	X
Cold	X	X	X
Cough, sore throat	X	X	X
Earache	X	X	X

	Drugstore Clinic	Doctor's Office	Urgent Care
Eye swelling or irritation	X	X	X
Fever, minor	X	X	X
Flu	X	X	X
Headache, minor		X	X
Rash/bumps, minor	X	X	X
Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea		X	X
Sinus	X	X	X
Sprains		X	X
Stitches			X

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