

# How to choose the right level of care



When you're in pain or feeling very ill, where should you go for health care? Choosing the right place at the right time can help you get the care you need — and possibly save you time and money.



## Emergency care

Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital if you believe a situation is life-threatening. Symptoms that generally signal an emergency include:

- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Seizure or loss of consciousness
- Shortness of breath/trouble breathing
- Chest pain or squeezing sensation in the chest
- Sudden numbness/weakness, slurred speech or visual changes
- High fever with headache and stiff neck
- Head injury or major trauma
- Severe burns
- Intense pain
- Poisoning or suspected overdose
- Severe reaction to an insect bite, medication or food

 **Open 24/7**

 **ER wait times may be longer for minor conditions**


 **Highest cost**




## Urgent care

Go to an urgent care clinic for prompt care for an illness or injury that's not life-threatening, such as:

- Colds and flu, earache, sore throat, headache, low-grade fever and rashes
- Minor injuries, such as sprains, back pain, minor cuts and burns

 **May have extended hours during evenings and weekends**

 **Wait times vary**

 **Higher cost**




## Office visit

Make an appointment with your health care provider for the following:

- Minor health concerns
- Preventive and routine care
- Screenings and vaccinations
- Managing health conditions (asthma, diabetes, heart disease, etc.)
- Referrals to specialty care

 **Typically open during regular business hours**

 **Wait times may be faster than ER or urgent care**

 **Lower cost**

## Not sure what to do?



Call your doctor's office or nurse line with questions. If you have a chronic medical condition, such as diabetes, heart disease or asthma, your doctor can advise you about symptoms that may require emergency, urgent or routine care.