

Quick Patient Guide:

How To Choose Between The Doctor's Office, Urgent Care and the Emergency Room (ER)

When you're feeling sick or have an injury, there are several places you can go for medical care: a doctor's office, an urgent care center, a retail health clinic or the emergency room. Here's a quick guide to help you know where to go.



Doctor's Office

For non-emergency situations

- Your doctor knows your health history, including medications and chronic conditions.
- Lower co-pay than a trip to the emergency room
- Shorter wait times
- Your doctor can refer you to a specialist or other medical professionals.



Urgent Care or Retail Health Clinic

If you can't reach your doctor or need care outside of regular office hours

- Walk-in clinics found in many large pharmacies and retail stores
- Treat simple conditions, such as cold, flu, ear infections and skin conditions
- Staffed by nurse practitioners and physician assistants
- Physicians on staff can provide care for a greater range of conditions, including performing x-rays.



Emergency Room (ER)

For urgent, acute and life-threatening conditions

- If you have a health emergency, call 911 or go to the emergency room right away.
- Do not visit the ER for routine care or minor illness. One of the other options will save you time and money and clear the way for patients in need of emergency treatment.

This guide is for educational purposes only. Always contact your doctor with any questions related to your healthcare.

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