

Emergency Room (ER) Use

You should go to the ER when you have signs of a medical condition that could be life threatening or that could cause permanent damage. If you think you have a condition like this, go to the nearest ER. Call 911 if you need help getting to the ER. If you aren't sure that you are having an emergency, call your doctor to ask if you should go to the ER.

You need urgent care if you are sick or hurt, but it is not life-threatening or going to cause permanent damage. Urgent care means that you need to go to your doctor as soon as possible.

You should make an appointment to go as soon as you can.

If you are going to an urgent care center, try to call your doctor before you go. Your doctor can help you decide if your problem is really urgent. Don't go to the ER for urgent care. Go to the ER only for true emergencies.

When to Use the ER		
ER	Same Day Doctor Visit (Urgent Care)	Regular Doctor Visit
Loss of consciousness, fainting	Earache	Sore throat
Signs of heart attack or stroke	Small cuts	Skin rash
Severe shortness of breath	Dog bite	Sexually-transmitted diseases
Bleeding severely	Sprains and strains	Medication review
Sudden, constant pain	Asthma (unless life-threatening)	Sports physical
Head injury	Low fever	Immunizations (shots)
Suicidal feelings	Coughs, colds, flu	TB test
High fever	Eye problems (infections, scratches)	Physical exams
Seizures	Constipation	Pregnancy test
Miscarriage or pregnancy with vaginal bleeding	Vomiting or diarrhea	Pap smear
Physical attack or rape	Stomach ache	Mammogram
Poisoning or drug overdose	Backache	Removing stitches
Any life-threatening situation	Migraine	
Severe vomiting or diarrhea that doesn't stop		
Paralysis		