

WHERE SHOULD I GO?

URGENT CARE CENTER OR EMERGENCY ROOM

When you or a family member suddenly becomes sick or has an accident, where do you go for treatment? The first thing to do is take stock of the situation. It is probably an emergency if you think the condition could result in death or serious medical complications. Some types of emergencies are chest pain with shortness of breath, serious or severe injuries, burns, electrical shock, broken bones, uncontrolled bleeding, seizure, unconsciousness, amputation or poisoning. For any of these you should immediately call 911 or visit the nearest emergency room.

Other situations are not life-threatening but may require immediate attention. These are likely not emergencies. They may be uncomfortable and serious, but do not require the attention of an emergency department of a hospital that is staffed, trained and ready for many life-threatening, serious conditions. Examples of these types of situations might be an illness you might see your regular doctor for, minor cuts and burns, strains and sprains, removal of foreign bodies in the eye or high fevers. For any of these, consider the services of an Urgent Care facility. These facilities are typically open earlier and later than your doctors office. And they are usually much less crowded than emergency rooms.

In any situation, try calling your doctor first, if available. Emergency Rooms are your best choice for life's worst medical situations. But if you don't have a serious life-threatening condition, an urgent care clinic will likely save you money and time and leave the emergency room free to handle more serious situations.