

THE RIGHT CARE, IN THE RIGHT PLACE, AT THE RIGHT TIME



When you or a loved one are suffering, it can be hard to decide what steps to take. Accidents and illness happen, sometimes at night and on weekends, so it's important to be prepared. Know your options for medical care!

- **Primary Care Physicians** are responsible for routine and preventive care. During non-office hours, your doctor will have an answering service that can help. Many practices have extended office hours and accept urgent walk-ins. Have your doctor's name and telephone number handy – Call Your Doctor First!
- **Urgent Care Centers** can help if your doctor is not available but you need treatment that doesn't require a visit to the Emergency Room. An Urgent Care Center can make a diagnosis, prescribe medication and, if necessary, send you to the ER. Know the location of your nearest clinic. Go there next.
- **Hospital Emergency Rooms** are for complex and sometimes life-and-death medical situations. The Emergency Room can be chaotic and stressful. It is not recommended for routine care or minor illnesses or injuries.
- **911**: If the symptoms are serious and you cannot wait, call 911 for a medical rescue.



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

Eat a healthful diet. It's easier than you think. Avoid salt, sugar, fried, and processed foods. Choose fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.

Be active. Exercise at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. A brisk walk will do.

Get a yearly check-up. Most insurances, including Medicaid, cover the cost of an annual check-up with your Primary Care Physician.

**The best way to avoid
the ER is not to get
sick in the first place!**



GET TO KNOW YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN

Get to know your doctor. A doctor who knows you, including your medical history, medications, family history, and personal situation is in the best position to provide you with the care you need.

Why see a stranger at the ER who may not speak your language or understand your culture when you can see a doctor you know and trust? Regular check-ups and screenings will help detect and treat conditions early. Chronic diseases, including diabetes and asthma, can be controlled. Early detection and treatment are key.

SHOULD I GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM?

Emergency Rooms are for emergencies! ER staff are trained to treat life-or-death situations. Going to the ER with a non-urgent condition means you'll wait for sicker patients to be seen first.

SIGNS OF AN EMERGENCY

How urgently is care needed? Could the ill or injured person die or become permanently disabled? Here are guidelines to help you decide.

CALL 911

- Choking or not breathing
- Head injury with loss of consciousness or confusion
- Neck or spine injury, especially if there is a loss of feeling or inability to move
- Electric shock or lightning strike
- Severe burns
- Severe chest pain or pressure
- Seizure of more than three minutes

GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM

- Trouble breathing
- Fainting, loss of consciousness or seizure
- Sudden peripheral blindness, inability to see, speak, walk or move
- Unusual or severe headache, especially if it starts suddenly
- Sudden weakness or drooping on one side of the body
- Drug or alcohol overdose
- Persistent dizziness or weakness
- Poisoning or inhaled smoke or poisonous fumes
- Sudden disorientation or confusion
- Deep wound or heavy bleeding
- Possible broken bone, especially with loss of movement
- Serious burn
- Coughing or throwing up blood
- High fever with headache or stiff neck
- Suicidal thoughts