Know Where to Go

When people overuse the emergency room for illnesses and injuries that do not require emergency medical help, it can cost you more and can drive up overall healthcare costs.

The info below can help you seek the most appropriate type of care.

PCP or Urgent Care
Your primary care provider (PCP) knows the full picture of your health and can help figure out how a current problem fits in with other conditions you may have. If your doctor can’t see you right away, go to an urgent care clinic (also called convenient care).

- Sprains or simple fractures
- Pink eye
- Dizziness
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Cold or flu symptoms

A PCP or Urgent Care is appropriate for:

Emergency Room
The emergency room (ER) provides immediate care to treat potentially life-threatening illnesses or injuries. It is not set up to treat long-term conditions, and the doctors won’t know your medical history like your PCP does.

- Severely broken bones
- Head, neck or back injuries
- Chest pain
- Bad cuts or burns
- Stroke symptoms

The ER is appropriate for:

Many health plans have a 24-hour nurse line to answer health questions and help their members decide where to go for care.

These are examples, not complete lists.
In a life-threatening emergency, you should always go to the closest hospital or call 911.