

# CONSIDER THIS

## Before Heading to the Emergency Room



It's natural to head to the emergency room (ER) when you're sick or in pain, but did you know that many visits to the ER could be avoided? In fact, many conditions could be addressed elsewhere, such as a primary care office or urgent care center.

### Let's Compare

ER	URGENT CARE
Designed to treat immediate life-threatening injuries or illnesses and other critical conditions	Treatment for non-life-threatening injuries or illnesses
Can assess and treat the following: chest pain, left arm and jaw pain, respiratory distress (difficulty breathing), sudden and severe pain, stroke-like symptoms (facial droop, dizziness, weakness, slurred speech), seizures, changes in mental status, severe allergic reactions (swelling lips/face/difficulty breathing), loss of consciousness (passing out), serious injuries with uncontrolled bleeding, broken bones, head injuries	Can assess and treat the following: muscle pain/strains, stomach pain, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea/constipation, skin rash, minor cuts or wounds, minor burns, urinary tract infections, common cold symptoms, mild fevers, earaches
Average cost: \$2,200 per visit	Average cost: \$180 per visit
Average wait time: 2 hours*	Average wait time: 30 minutes*

*\*Wait times significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic*

# The Consequences of ER Overuse



Overcrowding



Increased Wait Times



Increased Risk of Contracting Illnesses, such as COVID-19 or the Flu



Higher Costs\*

*\*Lab work and radiology (x-rays) services are 10x higher when performed in the ER*

*\*ER costs are 12x higher than a visit with your primary doctor and 10x higher than an urgent care visit*

## You Have Options

- 1. Call your doctor's office.** A nurse can relay information to your physician who will determine the appropriate course of action.
- 2. Go to an urgent care** for mild, non-life threatening symptoms.
- 3. Utilize telemedicine.** Check with your insurance provider to find telemedicine options or see if your primary care office can set up a telemedicine visit. If you do not have a primary care doctor, establish care with one to avoid an illness or injury getting worse.

## Remember This

- If your primary care doctor or urgent care provider believe you need a higher level of care, they will make sure you get to the ER.
- Dialysis patients experiencing symptoms of fluid overload, such as shortness of breath and swelling, should call their dialysis center to be assessed and determine the best course of action.

*Disclaimer: This information is for informational purposes only. It is not to take the place of a medical professional. Please consult with a medical professional and do not delay seeking care if you are experiencing any health related problem.*

### Information provided by:

United Healthcare - [www.uhc.com/member-resources/where-to-go-for-medical-care/urgent-care-vs-er](http://www.uhc.com/member-resources/where-to-go-for-medical-care/urgent-care-vs-er)

United Health Group: [www.unitedhealthgroup.com/content/dam/UHG/PDF/2019/UHG-Avoidable-ED-Visits.pdf](http://www.unitedhealthgroup.com/content/dam/UHG/PDF/2019/UHG-Avoidable-ED-Visits.pdf)

University of Chicago Medicine: [www.uchicagomedicine.org/forefront/health-and-wellness-articles/when-to-go-to-the-emergency-room-vs-an-urgent-care-clinic](http://www.uchicagomedicine.org/forefront/health-and-wellness-articles/when-to-go-to-the-emergency-room-vs-an-urgent-care-clinic)