

Getting Medical Care When You Need It



Why primary care?

- Regular check-ups
- Immunizations(shots)
- Prescriptions
- Normal aches/pains
- On-going treatment
- Referrals for specialty care

Call your PCP to make an appointment.



Why urgent care?

- Severe flu, fevers
- Minor cuts and injuries
- Other health issues that can't wait for a primary care appointment

Call your PCP with urgent health questions even after office hours.



What's an emergency?

- Chest pain/heart attack
- Broken bones
- Major bleeding that won't stop

In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

Before you go to the Emergency Room:

- a. Consider whether this is a true medical emergency, or whether you need to see your primary care physician. The Emergency Department will provide treatment just to stabilize your immediate condition. If you want a careful evaluation of what's happening, and if it's not a life-threatening emergency, go to your primary care doctor instead.
- b. Be as clear and specific as you can about your physical symptoms. It may help to write them down ahead of time. You can ask somebody to help you with this. You can use the paper to remind yourself of what to say to the doctor, or give it to the medical staff. Take a list of all of the medications you are taking and the dosages.
- c. Think about taking somebody with you to help work with the medical staff and help you remember what is said. Consider family or friends, advocates from a peer-run organization, or mental health staff.
- d. Remember that any advocate should go with you from the beginning. It may be difficult for an advocate to get to you once you have left the waiting room and gone into a treatment area.
- e. You could also ask your mental health staff to call the hospital ahead of time to alert them about your needs. Or you or your provider could call the Psychiatric Crisis Center and ask them to explain your needs to the hospital staff.