Urgent Care vs. Emergency Room

What's the Difference Between the Two?

It's important to know where to go when you're dealing with an illness or injury. Let's look at the differences between an urgent care center and an emergency room (ER) to help you choose the right care.

If you need immediate medical attention, your first thought may be to go to the ER. But if your condition isnt serious or life-threatening,there is a less expensive choice. An urgent care center offers the same high-quality care as an ER but at a fraction of the cost, potentially saving you hundreds of dollars.

Please note, if you have a life-threatening situation, go to your nearest emergency room or call 911.

Urgent Care Centers

Urgent care centers handle non-life-threatening situations, and many are staffed with doctors and nurses who have access to x-rays and labs onsite. Most urgent care centers are open late and on weekends and holidays. Choosing an urgent care center over the emergency room can save you time and money.

An urgent care center can treat you for common conditions such as:

• Earaches and Infections
• Minor Cuts, Sprains and Burns
• Fever and Flu Symptoms
• Cough, Cold and Sore Throat
• Animal Bites
• Mild Asthma
• Urinary Tract Infections
• Headaches
• Back and Joint Pain

Emergency Rooms

Emergency rooms are meant for true medical emergencies. They can handle trauma, x-rays, surgical procedures, and other life-threatening situations.Most hospitals have an emergency room that's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

An emergency room may be best if you experience:

• Sudden Numbness or Weakness
• Disorientation or Difficulty Speaking
• Sudden Dizziness or Loss of Coordination
• Seizure or Loss of Consciousness
• Shortness of Breath or Severe Asthma Attack
• Head Injury/Major Trauma
• Blurry or Loss of Vision
• Severe Cuts or Burns
• Heart Attack, Chest Pain or Chest Pressure
• Overdose
• Uncontrolled Bleeding
• Coughing or Vomiting Blood

https://www.cigna.com/individuals-families/understanding-insurance/urgent-care-emergency-room