

WHERE DO I GO FOR MEDICAL HELP?



Grossmont Healthcare District's
Health & Wellness Library

An East County community resource

DOCTOR/PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

WHAT IS PRIMARY CARE?

- Services that focus on people, not diseases
- Services for prevention, health promotion, and rehabilitation throughout people's lifetimes

WHAT IS A CLINIC?

- An organized medical service offering diagnostic, therapeutic, or preventative outpatient services.
- You'll receive services from a doctor/primary care provider
- Usually smaller than hospitals and people do not stay overnight

COMMON TYPES OF MEDICAL CLINICS WITH PRIMARY CARE SERVICES:

- Private practices (ex: Office of Dr. Wong, MD - Family Medicine)
- Group practices (ex: Office of Dr. Shah, MD & Dr. Lane, DO - Internal Medicine)
- Corporately owned clinics (ex: Dr. Johnson, MD - Family Medicine through hospital medical group)
- Family health centers (ex: Dr. Garcia, MD - Pediatrics at local family health center)

OTHER SPECIALIZED TYPES OF CLINICS:

- Dental clinics
- COVID testing clinics
- Physical therapy clinics
- Mental health clinics

EXAMPLES OF WHEN TO SEE YOUR DOCTOR/PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER:

“I schedule a checkup with my doctor once a year to make sure I'm in good health.”

“I live in a remote area and currently don't have my car so I messaged my primary care doctor through my patient portal with questions and scheduled a virtual appointment with my primary care doctor for now.”

“I made an appointment with my primary care physician because I hurt my shoulder at the gym and haven't recovered in the last four weeks.”



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URGENT CARE

WHAT IS URGENT CARE?

- Type of medical clinic that provides care for non-emergency medical issues requiring immediate care
- You need same-day care, it's not an emergency, but you shouldn't wait to see your primary care provider

COMMON REASONS TO VISIT URGENT CARE

- Sprains
- Muscle pulls
- Small cuts that may require stitching
- Wheezing/shortness of breath
- Vomiting
- Moderate flu-like symptoms
- Abdominal pain
- Fever
- Headache, etc.

ALTERNATIVE NAMES FOR URGENT CARE:

- After hours walk-in clinics
- Minute clinics
- Quick care clinics
- Minor emergency centers

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER:

- Check the hours of operation, not all urgent care centers are open 24/7
- Even at walk-in clinics, you'll need to wait your turn upon arrival



EXAMPLES OF WHEN TO VISIT URGENT CARE:

“I am going to a walk-in clinic, I thought I had a common cold but it's been three weeks and my cough is not going away and I'm finding it difficult to breathe.”

“My child is pulling at their ear and crying more than usual. I think they might have an ear infection so I made an appointment at my family health center for urgent care services”

“I am experiencing a high fever, abdominal pain, and vomiting which is interfering with my ability to work so I am driving to my medical group's urgent care clinic for same-day treatment.”

WHAT SHOULD I DO IN AN EMERGENCY?



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HOSPITAL

WHAT IS A HOSPITAL?

- For the treatment, both medical and surgical, of the sick and the injured; and for their housing during this process.

COMMON REASONS TO VISIT A HOSPITAL'S EMERGENCY ROOM AND/OR CALL 911:

- Unusual or bad headache, particularly if it started suddenly
- Suddenly not able to speak, see, walk, or move OR weak or drooping on one side of body
- Heavy bleeding
- Possible broken bone, loss of movement, especially if bone is pushing through the skin
- Coughing or throwing up blood
- Severe allergic reaction with trouble breathing, swelling, hives
- High fever with headache and stiff neck
- Throwing up or loose stools that do not stop, etc.



FACTORS TO CONSIDER DURING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES:

- Are you near a hospital? Can you get there quickly?
- Can I or the individual pay for an ambulance or is there another way I can be transported to a hospital's emergency room?

Consider these questions, but use your best judgment, and when in doubt, dial 9-1-1

EXAMPLES OF WHEN TO VISIT A HOSPITAL:

“I got stung by a jellyfish at the beach. The lifeguard wasn't on duty so my friend called the Poison Control hotline for advice and based on my chest pain drove me to the nearest hospital's emergency department.”

“My son drove me to the ER because I had sudden numbness in my leg and blindness in my eye. I was having a stroke and needed emergency care.”

“There was a fire at my work. I called 911. A fire truck arrived to put out the fire. And an ambulance transported a coworker to the hospital who had serious burns.”

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911

WHAT IS CONSIDERED A MEDICAL EMERGENCY?

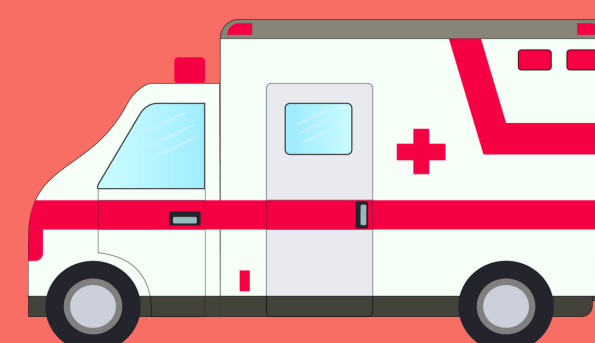
- If a person or unborn baby could die or be permanently disabled, the situation is considered a life-threatening medical emergency and you should call 911

DIAL 911 IF YOU OR SOMEONE IS:

- Choking
- Has stopped breathing
- Has a head injury from passing out
- Fainting or confusion
- Experienced electric shock or lightning strike
- Has a severe burn
- Severe chest pain or pressure or a seizure that lasted more than 1 minute or from which the person does not rapidly awaken
- OR for other reasons listed in the hospital section.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CALL 911?

- Your call connects you to a dispatch center closest to your current location
- If you're near a freeway or highway, it connects you to the California Highway Patrol (CHP)



WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD I BE PREPARED TO PROVIDE TO THE CALL-TAKER?

- Location of the emergency (street address, room/apartment number, if you're in a large building)
- The phone number you're calling from
- The nature of the emergency
- Details about the emergency, such as a physical description of a person who may have committed a crime, a description of any fire that may be burning, or a description of injuries or symptoms being experienced by a person having a medical emergency
- DO NOT hang up until the call-taker instructs you to do so

EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY DURING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY?

“My name is X and I’m at X location. I need an ambulance quickly as my leg is bleeding heavily. I am currently pinching it closed and adding pressure with a towel.”