# Choosing the Right Level of Care in a Medical Emergency

**Frederick Health**

Everyone knows that a primary care doctor is the best place to go when you are sick or in pain. By seeing your primary care physician on a regular basis, they will have your complete health history and an understanding of any underlying conditions you may have.

Sometimes you become sick or injured when the doctor's office is closed, and sometimes you need more urgent medical attention than your doctor can provide. This handout helps to explain **where to seek the best care in your time of need.**

## Primary Care
Call to make an appointment with your primary care provider if you have symptoms of a regular illness or need a regular check-up.

- Treatment of illness, including:
  *Colds and coughs*

  *Sore throat*

  *Flu and flu-like symptoms*

  *Ear infections*

  *Urinary tract infections*

  *Minor aches and pains*

  *Allergies*

- Management of chronic conditions, such as:
  *Diabetes*

  *Heart Disease*

  *COPD*

- General medical advice
- Annual Well Exams
- Immunizations
- Respiratory problems

### If you believe a life is in jeopardy, always call 911!

## Urgent Care
is an option if you have a minor illness or injury, your primary care provider is not available, and your problem cannot wait.

- Treatment of illness, including:
  *Colds, coughs, and upper respiratory infections;*

  *Sore throat;*

  *Flu and flu-like symptoms;*

  *Ear infections/Earache;*

  *Suspected urinary tract infection;*

  *Sexually Transmitted Illness;*

  *Fever* **If having seizures, go to the Emergency Department**

- Upset stomach
- Nausea or vomiting

- Adult IV hydration
- Skin rashes and infections
- Abscesses
- Sprains or suspected minor broken bones
- Musculoskeletal injuries
- Back pain or joint pain
- Toothache (if dentist is not available)
- Allergies
- Animal or insect bite

- Eye irritation and redness
- Minor cut/abrasion and sutures/stitching
- Minor burn
- Frequent, bloody, or painful urination
- Motor Vehicle Collision exams
- Workman's Comp exams
- Sports/DOT physicals
- Travel vaccines
- Laboratory and blood work
- X-Rays

# Choosing the Right Level of Care in a Medical Emergency CONT.

**The Emergency Department (ED)** is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You should seek care at the Emergency Department without delay if you have a serious or a life-threatening illness or injury.

- Chest pain or other heart attacks symptoms, such as:
  *Pressure, fullness, squeezing/pain in the center of your chest*
  *Tightness/burning/aching under the breastbone*
  *Chest pain with lightheadedness*

- Signs of a stroke, such as:
  *Sudden weakness or numbness of the face/arm/leg on one side of the body*
  *Sudden dimness or loss of vision*
  *Loss of speech or trouble talking*
  *Sudden severe headaches with no cause*

- Head injury or eye injury
- Sudden and severe headache or loss of vision
- Heavy bleeding that won't stop
- Dislocated joints

- Severe abdominal pain
- Deep cuts or severe burns
- High fever
- Severe asthma attack
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe or worsening reaction to an insect bite, sting, or medications
- Constant, severe/persistent vomiting
- Coughing up or vomiting blood
- Poisoning **Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 and ask for immediate home treatment advice**
- Domestic violence or rape
- Feelings of suicide

**If you believe a life is in jeopardy, always call 911!**