

PLAN FOR HEALTH

Choosing the Right Care

FEBRUARY 2023



Deciding where to go for care can be confusing. Even though we have options, our primary care doctor, the emergency room, retail clinics, telehealth visits or urgent care centers, we still feel puzzled. Many of us make these sudden decisions based on location, the pain we're in and even our financial circumstances. It can be hard to know which is the best choice in the moment. So how do you choose?

PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN (PCP)

It's important to have an established relationship with your PCP who knows and understands your current health status, your medical history, your family's medical history, and your personality and lifestyle. This information is imperative because decisions can be made early on to avoid, detect and/or manage a wide range of health issues.

Symptoms and/or conditions to consider visiting your PCP for:

- Cold and sinus symptoms
- Abdominal pain
- Ear infection

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Wheezing or a lasting cough
- Rashes
- Fever or flu

Additionally, seeing your PCP on an annual (or as needed) basis is easier now that telehealth has evolved over the years. Telehealth visits are a convenient option when you are on vacation, you can't get time off work, or can't leave the children home alone. For those who have concerns about their safety due to the pandemic, telehealth visits are a safer alternative.

URGENT CARE

Urgent care centers handle a variety of medical concerns and injuries that need to be treated right away but are not considered emergencies. If you're unable to see your doctor, your doctor is unavailable, or it's outside of business hours, these are some reasons why you may choose to go to an urgent care center.

Symptoms and/or conditions to consider visiting an urgent care for:

- Sinus infections
- Sore throat
- Sprains and strains
- Headaches
- Urinary tract infections
- Ear infections
- Abdominal pain
- Joint aches and pains
- Fever or flu
- Nausea or vomiting
- Minor broken bones and fractures
- Rashes

Retail clinicals, just like urgent care centers, are convenient and offer services like immunizations for the flu shot or Covid-19 vaccines. They can administer care for minor, uncomplicated illnesses such as colds, fevers, rashes, and sore throats.

Regardless of where you go for your care, always make sure to follow up with your PCP as advised. Test results and next steps are typically shared with your PCP if additional care is needed.

EMERGENCY ROOM

If you believe you are having a medical emergency and you need immediate treatment, **go directly to any hospital emergency room or call 911**. Paramedics can offer life-saving treatment on the way to the hospital. Hospital emergency departments provide care both day or night and are equipped to take over for the paramedics for the most complex or critical needs.

Symptoms and/or conditions to consider calling 911 or going to an emergency room for:

- Signs of a heart attack
- Signs of a stroke
- A bad accident
- Sudden fainting without explanation
- Serious burns
- Head injuries
- Change in mental status
- Uncontrolled bleeding

Sharecare Featured Challenge - Walk More This Winter

It is so important to still get your steps in during the winter months. Find some creative ways to work some extra steps into your day this month! Track for 21 days to meet the challenge goal from February 1st through the 28th. Join the challenge by clicking **Achieve → Challenges → Walk More This Winter Challenge**. You can enroll in the challenge starting January 25th.



Plan ahead...Join us next month for March's health topic: *Being Mindful of Your Mental Health*