

Where to Go for Care: Urgent Care, Primary Care, or Emergency Room?

Keep this guide handy so you know your options and where to go for the right care.

Samaritan Medical Care Center



Urgent Care: for an urgent illness or injury that needs attention today



Extended hours, including evenings, weekends, and holidays.



Varies, but typically waits are much shorter than in the emergency room (ER).



Less than an ER visit.



Primary Care: for most medical needs that are not urgent or emergent



Appointments typically available during weekday business hours, with limited availability on weekends.



The shortest wait if you have an appointment. Appointments are sometimes available the same day and almost always within 24 hours.



Less than an ER visit.



Emergency Room: for serious and life-threatening medical conditions and injuries



Open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.



Wait times can vary significantly. Life-threatening and serious conditions are seen first, so wait times can be up to several hours for other conditions.



Even a short ER visit can be expensive, and most insurances charge a higher co-pay.

Urgent Care Conditions Treated

- Cough, cold, and flu
- Sinus and respiratory infections
- Sore throat
- Pink eye
- Headache/migraine
- Urinary tract infection
- Cuts, burns, and rashes
- Sprains and fractures
- Sports and work injuries
- Ear infection
- Animal bite
- X-rays and limited lab tests
- Sports and camp physicals

Primary Care Conditions Treated

- Non-urgent conditions listed left
- Yearly visits and physical exams
- Specialist referrals for non-urgent issues
- Chronic condition management for hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, etc.
- Vaccinations
- Medication refill
- Counseling for smoking cessation, weight management, etc.

Emergency Room Conditions Treated

- Any severe/life-threatening conditions
- Heart attack or shortness of breath
- Stroke: face droop, arm weakness, speech difficulty
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Disorientation and severe vision impairment
- Seizure
- Overdose
- Severe burns
- Snake bite
- Severe head injury
- Shock or trauma
- Severe allergic reaction
- Intravenous or infusion therapy