

Choosing the right health care setting

You should go to your primary care doctor for care whenever you can. Your doctor knows you the best and has quick access to your medical records.

There are times when you might need to go to a facility other than your doctor's office. This list provides some examples of different care provider types and the services they generally provide.

Doctor's Office	Urgent Care Centers	Hospital Emergency Room (ER)/Hospital Freestanding ER
<p>**Average Cost: \$50 – \$150</p>	<p>**Average Cost: \$50 – \$200</p>	<p>**Average Cost: \$1,200 – \$1,500</p>
<p>Visit your doctor's office when you need routine care or treatment for a current health issue. Your primary doctor knows you and your health history, can access your medical records, provide preventive and routine care, manage your medications and refer you to a specialist, if necessary.</p> <p>Visit your doctor's office for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Routine checkups } Immunizations } Preventive services } Care to manage your general health } Common infections (e.g.: strep throat) } Minor skin conditions (e.g.: poison ivy) } Vaccinations – Tetanus Shots, Flu Shots } Pregnancy tests } Minor injuries – Cuts, Burns, Bruises } Ear aches } Sprains } Strains } Common infections (e.g.: strep throat) } Minor skin conditions (e.g.: poison ivy) } Vaccinations – Tetanus Shots, Flu Shots } Pregnancy tests } Minor injuries – Cuts, Burns, Bruises } Ear aches 	<p>Urgent care centers offer treatment for urgent, but non-life threatening injuries or illnesses, and are available on a walk-in basis to treat conditions such as*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Sprains } Strains } Minor broken bones (e.g., finger) } Minor infections } Small cuts that may need a few stitches } Minor injuries – Burns, Bruises } Ear aches } Common infections (e.g.: strep throat) } Minor skin conditions (e.g.: poison ivy) <p>Note: Some freestanding facilities* operating as Emergency Rooms can easily be confused as urgent care centers. Visiting a freestanding ER can have higher out of pocket costs.</p>	<p>The ER is for the treatment of life-threatening or very serious conditions that require immediate medical attention such as*:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> } Heavy bleeding } Large open wounds } Sudden change in vision } Chest pain } Sudden weakness or trouble talking } Major burns } Spinal injuries } Severe head injury } Difficulty breathing } Major broken bones <p>Important – Do not ignore a health emergency. If a situation seems life threatening, take action. Call 911 or your local emergency number right away.</p> <p>Many hospitals and other organizations are opening new "freestanding ER" locations in your community. These freestanding ERs may appear to be an urgent care center or convenience clinic, but they are actually still part of the hospital ER.</p> <p>If you receive care at one of these freestanding ERs, you may be charged hospital ER rates for any and all of your services.</p>

Be an informed health care consumer

The cost of medical care can vary widely. Your costs depend on where and how you receive care. Knowing the facts may help you manage your health care and your health care dollars.