



## Emergency Room vs. Urgent Care

- Go to an **Emergency Room** in the event of stroke, heart attack, serious trauma, unconsciousness, severe head injury, are in labor, or have some other potentially life-threatening issue.
- Urgent Care *definition*: Services provided for a condition that occurs suddenly and unexpectedly, requiring prompt diagnosis or treatment, such that in the absence of immediate care the individual could reasonably be expected to suffer chronic illness, prolonged impairment or require a more hazardous treatment.
- Examples of urgent care include sprains, some lacerations and dizziness.
- Urgent Care may cost more than a regular doctor visit, but less than the Emergency Room.
- Go to a **certified** Urgent Care.
- Go to an Urgent Care center if you may have a concussion, need a vaccine, have a sore throat, the flu, a splinter, a sprained ankle, or some other non-life-threatening issue.
- If you go to an Urgent Care facility and you need emergency room care, they will send you to the Emergency Room.

### **FAQ:**

1. Do you get to see a doctor faster if you come to the Emergency Room by ambulance?

**A:** Not necessarily. Everyone gets triaged.

2. Can an Urgent Care take care of a broken arm?

**A:** Yes. They can take x-rays and stabilize the arm. They will call an orthopedist if the break is unstable, and then you may be sent to the Emergency Room (ER). Otherwise, if surgery is needed, they will get you admitted to the hospital (no ER). If surgery is not required, you will follow-up with an orthopedist.

3. If you need to go to the Emergency Room after an Urgent Care Visit, will the patient be billed twice?

**A:** Yes, but a good Urgent Care will try to minimize the cost by letting the Emergency Room know what care you've already received.

4. How do people know if Urgent Care is certified?

**A:** Go to the Urgent Care center's website.

5. Can Urgent Care deal with mental health patients?

**A:** Yes, for acute problems with depression, panic attacks, anxiety, but not potential suicide, homicide, or schizophrenia.

6. If involved in a car accident and an EMS was called, can you refuse treatment and go to an Urgent Care Facility instead?

**A:** Yes, but EMS will have you sign a release.

7. Is Urgent Care good for allergic reactions?

**A:** Yes.

8. How long has Urgent Care been in San Antonio?

**A:** Since the 1970's.

9. Can Urgent Care treat spider bites, snake bites, and dog bites with risk of rabies?

**A:** Urgent Care is fine for these, except some may not have the rabies vaccine.

10. Is there a charge for copies of your records to go from Urgent Care to the Emergency Room?

**A:** No, but there is a charge if you want copies for other reasons.

11. Can Urgent Care administer IV's for dehydration?

**A:** Yes.

12. Do Urgent Care centers administer the meningitis and shingles vaccines?

**A:** Yes.

13. Are there insurance issues with Urgent Care?

**A:** If you're on an HMO, you may need pre-approval before being treated.

14. Do Urgent Care centers do drug testing?

**A:** Yes.