



WHEN TO TAKE YOUR CHILD TO The Emergency Department

One of the most common questions parents have is when to take their child to the emergency department versus when to take them to urgent care or their pediatrician.



EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Emergency departments are for medical emergencies – life-threatening illness or threat to life and limb. In other words, any condition that, if not treated immediately, could result in serious injury, death or disability. **Some examples include:**

- Difficulty breathing
- Seizures
- Severe vomiting
- Ingestion of poisonous/toxic substances
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe headache
- Possible broken bones
- Major cuts or burns
- Active suicidal thoughts



URGENT CARE

Urgent care offices can help with injuries or illnesses that do not appear serious or life-threatening but cannot wait until morning. **These include:**

- Allergic reactions
- Severe cough
- Abdominal pain
- Suspected simple fractures
- Strains and sprains
- Minor cuts or burns
- Skin infections
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- High fever



PEDIATRICIAN

Don't forget about your own pediatrician! Most pediatricians have after-hour appointments or call lines to help parents decide if their child needs to be seen right away or if it can wait until the next day. **These include:**

- Colds, coughs, and fevers
- Sore throat
- Ear pain
- Seasonal allergies
- Rashes
- Behavioral concerns
- Immunizations
- Medication refills
- Signed school notes