

UNDERSTANDING WHERE TO GO: PRIMARY, URGENT, OR EMERGENCY CARE?

Objective: Learn how to choose the right type of healthcare for different situations.

Section 1: Definitions

Use the following definitions to help you complete this worksheet

Primary Care: For regular check-ups, chronic condition management, and preventive care

Urgent Care: For non-emergency problems that need prompt care but aren't life-threatening

Emergency Care: For serious or life-threatening conditions that need immediate attention

Section 2: Know the Difference

Sort the situations into the correct type of care.

Write "P" for Primary, "U" for Urgent, and "E" for Emergency.

| Situation | Type of Care (P/U/E) |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. You need a yearly physical exam | 1. ____ |
| 2. You have a sore throat and mild fever on a weekend | 2. ____ |
| 3. You're having chest pain and trouble breathing | 3. ____ |
| 4. You need a refill on a prescription | 4. ____ |
| 5. You sprained your ankle playing sports | 5. ____ |
| 6. You've been in a serious car accident | 6. ____ |
| 7. You need a flu shot | 7. ____ |
| 8. You cut your hand and it won't stop bleeding | 8. ____ |
| 9. You have a rash that's spreading quickly | 9. ____ |
| 10. You want to talk about stress, anxiety, or depression | 10. ____ |

Section: Compare the Features

Fill in the chart using check marks (✓) to show which features apply to each type of care.

| Feature | Primary | Urgent | Emergency |
|--|---------|--------|-----------|
| Open during evenings and weekends | | | |
| Treats life-threatening conditions | | | |
| Best for long-term care and follow -up | | | |
| More affordable than ER | | | |
| Offers preventive services (vaccines, etc) | | | |

Bonus Tips

If you’re ever unsure where to go, many insurance companies and clinics have 24/7 nurse lines to help you decide.

Some primary care providers offer virtual, or telehealth, services for some health needs.

Ask your provider if you are interested in a telehealth appointment.

Section 4: Reflect & Apply

Have you ever gone to the emergency room for something that wasn’t a true emergency? What happened?

Why is it important to know the difference between these types of care?

What would you do if you needed care after hours but your primary doctor’s office is closed?

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