

When to Visit the Emergency Room

The Emergency Room (ER) in hospitals can be very busy, especially during the holidays. Always go to the ER if you have been in a major accident or for potentially life-threatening symptoms like:

- Trouble breathing, or catching your breath
- Severe abdominal or chest pain/pressure
- Weakness or tingling on one side of your body
- Loss of consciousness
- Heavy bleeding

For those with non-emergency health questions and concerns, there may be better options than visiting an ER. Calling your family doctor or care provider or going to a walk-in clinic may resolve your health concern. If you need urgent, same day care, consider an Urgent and Primary Care Centre (UPCC).

Urgent and Primary Care Centres (UPCCs) provide better access to same-day, urgent, non-emergency health care, including in the evening and on weekends. They are an alternative to visiting emergency departments for issues that do not need to be seen in a hospital. For example, patients who require medical attention within 12 to 24 hours for something like a sprain, minor cut or burn can visit an Urgent and Primary Care Centre. For more information on UPCCs and to find out if there is a location close to you, see [Urgent and Primary Care Centres](#).

If you are unsure if a health concern is an emergency, call HealthLink BC at **8-1-1** for advice.

Taking a proactive approach to your health can also help you make decisions on when to seek care. Click on the links below for more information:

- [Informed Health Decisions](#)
- [Making Good Health Decisions](#)