

Routine Care, Urgent Care and Emergency Care

There are three kinds of health care you may need: routine care, urgent care, or emergency care.

Routine care is the regular care you get from your PCP. Routine care is also care you get from other doctors that your PCP sends you to. Routine care can be check ups, physicals, health screenings and care for health problems like diabetes, hypertension and asthma. If you need routine care, call your PCP's office and ask to make an appointment.

Urgent care is medical care you need within 24 hours, but not right away. Some urgent care issues are:

- Colds
- Earaches
- Medication refills
- Sprains
- Cuts and scrapes
- Sore throat

If you need urgent care, call your PCP's office. If your PCP's office is closed, leave a message with the person who answers the phone when the office is closed. Then call the After Hours Nurse Help Line at 888-210-6203. A nurse will help you decide if you need to go to the doctor right away. The nurse will tell you how to get care. You do not have to go to the emergency room or use an ambulance for routine or urgent care.

Emergency care is medical care you need right away for a serious, sudden (sometimes life-threatening) injury or illness. The emergency room is NOT the place to go for everyday medical problems, such as colds, earaches, medications refills, long-standing chronic problems or minor injuries. Call your PCP for medical problems that are not real emergencies.

These are some examples of emergencies:

- Chest pain
- Bleeding that cannot be stopped
- Loss of consciousness
- Poisoning
- Bad burns
- Trouble breathing
- Paralysis



What to do if you have an emergency:

- Call 911 or go to your nearest emergency room.
- Show the emergency room your MedStar Family Choice member ID card.
- As soon as you can, call your PCP.

If you need to be in a hospital, your PCP must arrange and oversee your care. MedStar Family Choice will pay for the hospital and for any special care you need, but only if your PCP says it is okay. So you must not go to a hospital without calling your PCP unless you have an emergency.