



Catholic Healthcare West

**Ask the Expert**  
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**Q: With the kids back in school and cold and flu season around the corner, it seems like it's only a matter of time before one of my children will be sick or injured while playing on the playground. How do I know when to take my children to our pediatrician or an urgent care verses the emergency room?**

**A:** As you may already know it's very important to maintain an on-going relationship with your pediatrician. If you or your child is sick with a cold, the flu or an ear infection, its best to reach out to your pediatrician for care. If it's on the weekend or late at night and an illness that can't wait until your pediatrician's office is open, an Urgent Care center is an excellent choice.

Not only can an Urgent Care center provide care for people with common illnesses or infections such as a sore throat, earache, rash or bronchitis, but they can also care for injuries such as sprains, broken bones, burns, bites or stings. Urgent Care centers are typically open early in the morning until late in the evening, as well as on the weekend. For example, Catholic Healthcare West's (CHW) Urgent Care centers, which have three locations in Ahwatukee, Gilbert and Queen Creek, are open seven days a week – including holidays – from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Before an illness or accident occurs, it's a good idea to identify the closet CHW Urgent Care center to your home that accepts your insurance, and determine what level of care they are staffed and equipped to care for if the need should arise.

Emergency room visits should happen when you or your child has a life-threatening situation. If you truly believe you have a life-threatening situation, head immediately to your closest emergency room or dial 9-1-1. To learn more about CHW's Urgent Care centers, please visit [www.chwurgentcare.org](http://www.chwurgentcare.org).

*Ricky Swearingen, D.O., is the medical director of Catholic Healthcare West's (CHW) Urgent Care in Ahwatukee located at 4545 East Chandler Boulevard. For more information, please call 480.728.4000. CHW's Urgent Care centers are open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., every day of the year, including holidays. CHW Urgent Care in Ahwatukee is part of the CHW family, which includes Chandler Regional Medical Center, Mercy Gilbert Medical Center, CHW Urgent Care in Gilbert and Queen Creek, and the Sun Lakes Laboratory.*