



Catholic Healthcare West

Ask the Expert
Arizona Republic

Q: In the event of an emergency, is there anything I need to bring to the Emergency Room for myself or my family member who is injured or ill?

A: No one knows when an emergency situation may arise, so it's important that you prepare ahead of time in case you or a family member needs to go to the emergency room.

Emergency rooms are for situations requiring immediate attention. If you are unsure where you should go, call your primary care physician (PCP) or pediatrician. If it is truly a life threatening situation, call 911 immediately.

Before an emergency happens, there are several things you can do to be prepared, including:

- Contact your health insurance company to find out what hospitals and emergency rooms are in your provider's network.
- Always keep your insurance card(s) in your wallet so they are easily available. Be sure to bring cash or a credit card with you as well. This will help you get home in the event you were taken to the hospital by ambulance.
- Make a list of all of the medications you or your family members currently take, including the dose or strength of the medication and how often it is taken. Be sure to list herbal supplements as well.
- Bring the name and telephone number of your primary care physician and any specialists that also take care of you or your family member, such as a cardiologist, neurologist, or surgeon.
- List any known allergies, health conditions, past surgeries and family health history.
- Bring a list of friends or family members, including their telephone numbers, that you may want called to assist you in your illness or to provide a ride home for you.
- Keep a notepad and pen with the list so you can bring it with you to write down questions or medical information provided at the emergency room.
- Keep all of your medical information in a folder in an easy to find location so you can access it quickly in an emergency.
- If you or your child has ingested a chemical or substance, or even taken the wrong medication, be sure to bring it with you so the medical staff knows exactly what was consumed.

It's also a good idea to talk to your child's pediatrician, your PCP or specialist and ask when it would be appropriate to go to the emergency room, especially if you already have a health condition. Your PCP may recommend a specific emergency room depending on your health condition or one that specializes in caring for children. He or she may also recommend that you visit an Urgent Care center should you or a member of your family have a common illness or

infection that will not need the resources of an Emergency Department. 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.

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