

When to go to the emergency room vs. urgent care

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Credit: Loyola University Health System

When injury or sickness strikes, it can be hard to know where to go for proper care and treatment and if the situation is urgent enough to call 911.

Loyola Medicine [emergency](#) medicine physician Robert Riggs, MD, and family medicine physician Khalilah Babino, DO, answer those questions in this video:

In the simplest of scenarios, if your condition seems serious and you're considering contacting emergency services, call 911 right away or head to your closest [emergency department](#).

"If it seems as if your condition could be life threatening, coming into the emergency department is your best option," Dr. Riggs said.

Some conditions and symptoms that should be brought to the emergency department include:

- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Pregnancy complications
- Seizures
- Deep cuts
- Serious burns
- Broken bones that protrude through the skin
- Stroke symptoms

However, if your non-life threatening condition requires attention but there's a wait to be seen by your [primary care physician](#) or you want a doctor's opinion, immediate care may be for you. "If your condition is something you'd normally address with your primary care physician, an immediate care center can probably help," Dr. Babino said.

A few of the conditions that can most likely be treated at an immediate care center include:

- Strep throat

- Pink eye
- Minor rash
- Ear or sinus infections
- Nosebleeds
- Small cuts
- Cold and flu symptoms

The emergency department at Loyola Medicine is available 24/7 and is home to experts in emergency [medicine](#). A level 1 trauma center, Loyola Medicine's emergency department features some of the most highly skilled experts in trauma and [emergency medicine](#) ready to care for patients in their urgent time of need.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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