



ER or Not?

Know when to go to the
Emergency Room – and when
another option may be better

 For life-threatening emergencies, call 911.



USUALLY NOT THE ER

These concerns are often best
handled by your primary care
office, pediatrician, or urgent care.



Colds, coughs,
sore throat, or
mild flu symptoms



Mild fever
(unless your baby
is younger than
3 months)



Ear pain, pink eye,
or a mild rash
without trouble
breathing



Minor cuts,
bruises, strains,
or sprains



Mild vomiting or
diarrhea when
fluids can be kept
down



Medication refills,
routine concerns, or
chronic symptoms
that have not
suddenly changed



Seasonal allergies,
congestion, or
sinus pressure



Mild headache,
body aches, or
back pain



GO TO THE ER NOW

Emergency warning signs
for adults and children



ADULTS



Chest pain, chest pressure, or pain
spreading to the arm or jaw



Trouble breathing or severe
shortness of breath



Signs of stroke: face drooping, arm
weakness, speech trouble, sudden
severe headache



Severe allergic reaction with swelling,
hives, or trouble breathing



Severe bleeding, major burns,
or serious injury



Fainting, seizure, new confusion,
or hard to wake up



Severe abdominal pain, or
coughing / vomiting blood

CHILDREN



Trouble breathing, blue lips,
or severe wheezing



Fever in a baby younger than 3 months:
100.4°F (38 °C) or higher



Seizure, fainting, unresponsive,
or hard to wake up



Severe allergic reaction with swelling,
hives, or trouble breathing



Severe bleeding, deep wound,
serious burn, or major injury



Head injury with vomiting, confusion,
or loss of consciousness



Signs of dehydration: no tears, very dry
mouth, not peeing, or unable to keep
fluids down



WHEN IN DOUBT

If symptoms are severe, suddenly getting worse,
or you are worried, seek emergency care right away or call 911.

This poster is for general guidance and does not replace medical advice.

