

## Going to the Emergency Room



1. **Plan Ahead** - If you have a serious health problem, learn how to use the Emergency Room.

- Where is your nearest ER? How can you get there?
- Which hospital system does your primary care use?

2. **An emergency is when you have a severe injury or illness.** Here are some signs of an emergency:

- Confusion or blackouts
- Jerks or twitches like a seizure
- Feeling so short of breath that you can hardly speak
- Your skin or lips look blue, purple, or gray
- Bad pain and growing pain
- Bleeding that won't stop or a cut that might need sutures.
- A burn that is large or covers the hands, feet, groin, chest, or face.
- A bone that might be broken.



is

3. **Call Your Primary Care Office First** - Ask for help, if you don't know if you have an emergency. Your PCP can also call ahead and tell the Emergency Room.

4. **Treating Your Illness at Home** - Learn about your health and your illnesses. Learn what symptoms you may have at home. Learn what to do when you have symptoms. Take "as needed" medicines the way you were taught. Learn how and when to take them when you feel ill. If you take "as needed" medicine, write down the time and amount so you can tell the ER staff.

5. **Try to Stay Calm** - Write down your symptoms. Collect the things you need. Bring any supplies you need. Bring something to keep you busy so you don't get too worried. It's a good idea not to eat or drink anything until you check if it's okay. Try to be patient if you need to wait.

6. **Bring a helper** - If you want help at the hospital, ask someone you trust to come with you or meet you there.



7. **Bring Your Plan of Care** - It has important info: health insurance, your doctors' names and contact info, your medicine list, allergies, medical history.

7. **Speak up for what you need** - You know you best. Speak up if you have a question or a concern. Tell someone if you are having pain, if you need help, or if you are afraid. Tell someone if it will be hard for you to do what they ask.

8. **Get Info in Writing** - Ask the ER to write down their instructions so you can share them with your team.

9. **Follow Up with Primary Care** - After the ER visit, call your primary care to tell what happened. Many ERs will send a report to your PCP's office. Your PCP can help with ideas on what to do next.

\*Adapted from: "10 Things for Parents to Know Before Heading to the ER" by Sylvia Owusu-Ansah MD, MPH, FAAP, Sept 24, 2019



Created by the Indiana Complex Care Coordination Collaborative (IC4)

Revised 1.10.2025

IC4 is a grant between Indiana University and the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration funded by enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) funding through Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act as Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Stabilization Grants, CFDA # 93.778 Medical Assistance Program.