Do you know where to go if you have a minor injury or illness such as a sprain, small cut or earache? You may not need to visit the emergency room (ER), which can lead to higher costs and long waits. The ER can cost from $100 to $250 in copays and other fees, while ER alternatives can charge $10 to $40 per visit. An ER visit can also take longer because doctors have to rank the most urgent, life-threatening cases first. There are other choices when you don’t need doctors right away. Instead of the ER, you could go to:

- Urgent care centers — Staffed by doctors who treat health problems that should be looked at right away but aren’t as serious as emergencies. Doctors can often do X-rays, lab tests and stitches.
- Retail health clinics — Staffed by health care experts who give basic health care services to walk-in patients. Most often, these clinics are found in a major pharmacy or retail store.

What to know before you go to the newest option: freestanding ERs

These are rapidly being built and look a lot like urgent care centers. In many cases, freestanding ERs are owned by a hospital and are an extension of that hospital’s ER. That means your cost shares could be the same or less like ER. Freestanding ERs may not provide as a hospital may charge higher than those charged at urgent care centers. Be aware that your cost share will likely be the same as if you had been seen at a hospital ER. In many cases you may not know those costs until you get your Explanation of Benefits (EOB).

Always remember, if it’s a true emergency that’s life-threatening or disabling, call 911 or go to a hospital emergency room.

Know where to go

Don’t wait until you’re sick or injured to locate a clinic or urgent care doctor. If it’s not a true emergency, use this list to help find the closest clinic or urgent care.

Call 24/7 NurseLine

Not sure what care is best for you? Our qualified registered nurses can help. Get more information here. There’s also a helpful video.

Get the list

Get the most from your Anthem benefits

This is where you can find out what the many health care resources available to you from Anthem.

* Average health plan copays. For many members, deductibles and coinsurance may apply, which can make an even greater difference in the cost between an emergency room and alternate site of care.