

ER, URGENT CARE, OR RETAIL CLINICS: WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

When you're sick or injured, knowing where to go to seek care can make a big difference ... in how long you wait ... and how much you spend to feel better.

Your Doctor:

For health issues that aren't serious, or that can wait for normal business hours, seeing your regular doctor is always an option:

- » He or she knows your health history.
- » Visiting your doctor is often the most economical way to feel better.
- » You won't have to wait, just show up at your appointment time.

Walk-in Clinics:

Walk-in clinics are open after hours and on weekends. **Urgent care** and **immediate care** facilities are located in clinics, hospitals or other health care facilities. **Retail clinics** (also called **convenient care clinics**) operate within a retail store and offer limited service. Visit either of these facilities when:

- » You can't wait to see your regular doctor.
- » You aren't sick or injured enough for the ER.

Urgent Care or Immediate Care Clinics:

Located in a hospital or other health care setting, these clinics are staffed by doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners.

Some emergency departments offer urgent care services during off-business hours. When you visit an emergency room that also offers urgent care services, a preliminary level of care (urgent or emergent) is determined based on your symptoms. In some cases, the determination is made after the diagnosis is confirmed. This may result in a bill for emergency department services even though you started in the urgent care department.

Retail Clinics (Convenient Care Clinics):

The Alliance offers access to some Shopko FastCare Clinics and all Walgreens Take Care Clinics. Located in a retail setting, these clinics are staffed by nurse practitioners and specialize in care for those 18 months and older. They can provide a quick and easy alternative when you need care for minor illnesses, or need a lab test, vaccination or camp/sports physical. Use our **Online Provider Directory** (see box at right) to locate a retail clinic near you.

For more information on **Shopko FastCare Clinics** and **Walgreens Take Care Clinics**, please refer to the back of this sheet.

Emergency Rooms (ERs):

Usually located in a hospital, an ER is equipped to focus on serious medical emergencies. Visiting the ER for a non-emergency is not the best way to get well:

- » It will cost you more than it would at a doctor's office or walk-in clinic.
- » You'll probably spend more time waiting, as more severe cases will be seen first.
- » You'll be cared for by a doctor who has never seen you before and who doesn't know your particular health history.

Refer to our guide on the back of this sheet to quickly and easily determine the best type of facility for you depending on your immediate care needs.

Find a Health Care Facility:

Our convenient **Online Provider Directory** includes information on health care providers in The Alliance coverage areas. To find a facility in your area to best fit your care needs, click on the **Find a Doctor** button at www.the-alliance.org.



You can search for health care facilities or specific medical professionals by **Location/Specialty**, by **Name**, or by the **Medical Condition** they treat. You can also sort providers by geographic location or create a "Personalized Provider Directory."

Find a Convenient Care Clinic:

You can find convenient care (retail) clinics through our Online Provider Directory. To do so:

- » Select **Providers by Location/Specialty**.
- » Choose your network.
- » In the "Provider Type" field, select **Convenient Care Clinics**.
- » Orient your search by choosing a starting location and then click **Find Providers**.

Urgent Care Centers can be searched in a similar fashion. Remember: if you are facing a serious medical emergency, go to the nearest hospital's emergency department or dial 9-1-1.

Determining Your Level of Care

Use this handy guide to determine which facility is best for you, depending on your needs.

Visit the **ER** for:

- » Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- » Chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure
- » Fainting, sudden dizziness, weakness
- » Confusion or changes in mental status
- » Any sudden or severe pain
- » Uncontrolled bleeding
- » Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- » Coughing or vomiting blood
- » Suicidal feelings
- » Unusual abdominal pain
- » Major broken bones

Visit an **urgent care** or **immediate care clinic** for:

- » Minor cuts, scrapes, bruises and rashes
- » Sore throat
- » Urinary burning
- » Ear pain
- » Sprains
- » Fever
- » Back pain
- » Eye irritations
- » Colds and flu
- » Minor fractures (finger)

Visit a **retail clinic (convenient care clinic)** for:

- » Allergies
- » Athlete's foot
- » Bladder infections
- » Cold and flu symptoms, sore throat, laryngitis, upper respiratory infections and sinus infections
- » Cold sores, eye or ear infections, and impetigo
- » Insect bites, poison ivy, minor burns and rashes, and minor sunburns
- » Ringworm
- » Swimmer's ear
- » Lab tests such as mononucleosis, pregnancy, or strep throat
- » Camp or sports physicals

Visit your **regular doctor**:

- » When you can wait for an appointment
- » For prescription refills

IMPORTANT BILLING INFORMATION FOR RETAIL (CONVENIENT CARE) CLINICS

SHOPKO FASTCARE CLINICS

Shopko FastCare Clinics are located in select Shopko stores. For FastCare Clinic locations in your area, select Convenient Care Clinic as your Provider Type in our Online Provider Directory/Find a Doctor function.

When you choose to receive care at a FastCare Clinic, you will be required to pay the FastCare Clinic fee at the time of service. At that time, ask the clinic to submit a claim to The Alliance, using the address provided on the back of your health plan identification card.

Payment will be made to the provider and you will be reimbursed directly. The Alliance is working with these providers to ensure that these refunds are made within 30 days of receipt by the hospital or clinic.

WALGREENS TAKE CARE CLINICS

Walgreens Take Care Clinics are located in Walgreens pharmacies and other locations throughout the U.S.

If you choose to receive care from a Walgreens Take Care Clinic, Walgreens will file a claim on your behalf. Any co-pay or deductible will be billed to the employee directly from Walgreens. You may access any Walgreens Take Care Clinic location throughout the U.S. and pay in-network charges.

If you do not present your health plan identification card, you may be required to pay at the time of service. In these cases, Walgreens will refund any payments to you as soon as they receive payment from your health plan administrator.