

Emergency Department Checklist

Plan ahead before a trip to the emergency department:

- ✓ **Check with your primary care physician first.** If you're unsure about whether or not your condition is an emergency, call your regular physician or physician-on-call first. Your regular doctor is most familiar with your medical history and may be able to recommend the best course of action, which may or may not include a visit to your local emergency department.
- ✓ **Bring identification and insurance cards.** Always take identification and insurance information with you to the emergency department. This will help expedite the registration process at the emergency department.
- ✓ **Know your prescriptions and allergies.** Bring a list of active medications, dose and frequency, or better still, bring the prescription containers with you. If you have allergies to medicines or foods or have specific illnesses, bring a list of these conditions so you can easily provide the information to your urgent care provider. Prepare this list in advance before an emergency and keep an updated copy in your wallet or purse. Also if you bring medicine bottles with you to the emergency department, don't forget to have someone (family member or friend) take the medications home for you to prevent loss.
- ✓ **Know the phone numbers and the route.** Be sure to include the phone number of your physician and local emergency department in your cell phone or in your list of important numbers. Also, be sure you know the route to the hospital.
- ✓ **Bring a pad, a pen, and a friend.** A friend or family member can help you ask questions that you may not have thought to ask. Carrying a pad and pen will help you keep note of specific details such as doctor recommendations.
- ✓ **Patients are seen in the order of severity.** Just because you arrive to the emergency department before someone else does not mean you will see a doctor first. Patients are seen based on the severity or acute nature of their issue. Ask the admission/triage nurse at check-in if they can provide assistance with pain management, which may include ice or hot packs, pillows and blankets, or, at some hospitals, over-the-counter medication.
- ✓ **Prepare for the unexpected.** If you have young children, don't forget that you may need to provide all the necessary information and guidance to babysitters, neighbors, afterschool activity advisors, etc. If necessary, be sure the right people know if your child has special needs or severe allergies. If the child swallowed what may be poison, bring the bottle with you to the emergency department. Additionally, bring activities or toys to keep young children content while waiting.