

How do I choose?

ER, Urgent Care, or Doctor's Office

Knowing where to go when you need medical treatment can be confusing, especially at the the moment when you are sick or injured. Understanding your options before you require medical care will better prepare you to make the right choice during a time of need.

Sampson Regional Medical Center offers a range of care, from primary care clinics to urgent care to emergency services. Each setting provides a different level of care and is appropriate for certain types of situations. So, how do you choose whether you should wait for an appointment with your doctor's office, head to a walk-in clinic or urgent care, or go straight to the Emergency Room? We're here to guide you.

First rule: If you are experiencing a critical health event or when in doubt about the seriousness of an illness or injury, always call 911 or go directly to the nearest emergency room. Hospital emergency rooms provide the highest level of care and offer more comprehensive specialty health services for treating emergencies than your doctor's office or an urgent care.

Emergency Rooms are designed to treat severe and life-threatening conditions. They are equipped with the widest range of services, can provide diagnostic tests, and have access to specialists.

Urgent care centers are a great choice when you feel like you need care right away for a non-life threatening condition and cannot see your regular doctor. These clinics are designed to fill the gap between your primary care provider and the ER. Urgent care centers can save you time and money, compared to an ER visit, and most urgent care locations provide on-site diagnostic tests, such as labs or x-ray.

You should use urgent care as a supplement to your doctor's office at times when you need medical care during the evening or on weekends or when you cannot get a same day or next day appointment with your doctor. However, an urgent care should never be a substitute for your primary care physician. Always follow up with your primary care doctor after a visit to the hospital or urgent care to make sure your health is restored and to keep them updated of any changes in your health.

When you are ill, hurt, or in pain and can wait for an appointment with your primary care doctor, you will be in good hands. Your primary care doctor can make very informed decisions about your treatment because they know your medical history and underlying conditions. The relationship you build with your primary care doctor helps them know your health well. Because they have established a baseline through yearly checkups, they are more likely to pick up on small changes in your health and can provide more personalized care.

Primary care physicians provide a range of services. While they can treat acute illnesses, such as the common cold, flu, infections, etc., they also help monitor and manage chronic conditions, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc. In addition to caring for you when you're sick, they promote good health by coordinating preventive health screenings, providing yearly checkups, educating on weight loss and nutrition, and directing your medication use. When your condition is outside of their scope, they can coordinate your care with other specialists.

Bottom line – if your ailment can wait for an appointment with your primary care doctor, then that's the best place to go. If you don't have a primary care doctor, it's important to establish your care with one. To find a doctor nearby, visit www.SampsonRMC.org/findadoc.



Did You Know?

29% of ER visits actually require emergency care. That means 71% of visits to the average ER could be treated at an urgent care or by a primary care doctor. And, emergency care is 10 times more expensive than an urgent care or primary care visit!

Know where to go:

Emergency Room or Urgent Care

When in doubt about the seriousness of an illness or injury, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

	Emergency Room	Urgent Care
Fever, upset stomach, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea		✓
Flu-like symptoms, earache, sore throat, colds, bronchitis, and upper respiratory infections		✓
Poisoning	✓	
Severe pain	✓	
Problems related to pregnancy	✓	
Minor injuries/lacerations; cuts that may require stitches		✓
Severe or uncontrolled bleeding	✓	
Sprains, strains, and minor fractures		✓
Compound bone fractures that break through the skin; risk of loss of limb	✓	
Simple foreign body removal from eyes, ears, nose, or skin		✓
Mild to moderate burns		✓
Difficulty breathing; Asthma attacks	✓	
Rashes, skin infections, minor allergic reactions		✓
Painful or burning urination, urinary tract infection		✓
Major head injury	✓	
Stroke symptoms	✓	
Chest pain or other signs of heart attack	✓	
Unconsciousness, convulsions, seizures	✓	

Knowing where to go when you need immediate medical assistance can save you time and money! At the Emergency Department, patients with serious or life threatening emergencies take priority over those with minor conditions. And, the cost of an emergency room visit is most often more than that of an urgent care visit.

Sampson Regional Medical Center is glad to serve you when your medical needs are immediate, whether chest pain, trauma, bumps and scrapes, or flu-like symptoms. Choosing the right place to receive that care can help us treat you in a more timely manner.

Sampson Regional Medical Center Emergency Department

607 Beaman Street, Clinton, NC
Entrance off Cooper Drive
910-592-8511

Clinton Urgent Care

1004 Beaman Street, Clinton, NC
910-592-9113

Open 7 Days a Week
Evening & Weekend Hours