



National Indian Health Board NATIONAL TRIBAL COVID-19 RESPONSE

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Seeking Medical Care or Urgent Care Not Related to COVID-19

In response to COVID-19 many non-essential surgeries, and medical and dental procedures have been disallowed, and consequently cancelled or postponed. What happens if an urgent or emergency situation unrelated to COVID-19 occurs and you need medical care? Knowing the level of care you need can ensure that you get the appropriate medical attention while allowing hospitals and urgent care providers to make the best use of their available resources. You'll need to decide whether an injury or illness requires emergency or urgent care.

Medical Emergencies

If you are experiencing life-threatening symptoms, call 9-1-1 and go to the emergency room.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Coughing or throwing up blood
- Cardiac arrest or stopped breathing
- Severe burns
- Accidental poisoning or overdose
- Broken bones
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe chest pain or pressure
- Deep wounds
- Severe or persistent abdominal pain
- Any injury or illness that may cause harm without immediate treatment.

Don't Delay Your Care

During this time of uncertainty, you may be apprehensive to visit a hospital or emergency room. Fear and uncertainty should never stop you from seeking care you need. Hospitals and Indian Health Service (IHS) facilities are still offering emergency medical services. Waiting too long to seek care for life-threatening emergencies is a greater risk to your health than the risk of becoming infected with COVID-19. The emergency room may have signs or other indications of precautionary measures or special procedures that they are following to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, so pay close attention before you enter the building.



Urgent Care

Urgent care services are intended for the treatment of illnesses or injuries that would not result in further disability or death if not treated immediately.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Minor injuries
- Wounds
- Fractures
- Nausea
- Bronchitis and strep throat
- Abdominal pain
- Dehydration
- Minor infections
- Rash
- Fever
- Diarrhea

Going to an Urgent Care Facility

As stay-at-home orders are being lifted and urgent care facilities begin resuming services, it is important to remain aware of COVID-19 precautions that the urgent care center might be taking for your safety.

Call the facility ahead of time. They may perform a telephone screen to determine if you have symptoms related to COVID-19. They may also want you to come through a separate entrance, direct you to an alternative location or have more specific instructions before your visit. Remember to wear a mask and maintain social/physical distance when entering an urgent care facility, and follow any special procedures that they may have in place.



Telehealth and Telemedicine for Non-Emergencies



Many providers are offering telehealth options for customers who have access to broadband internet. Telehealth providers can provide medical advice, diagnosis of certain conditions, and even prescribe certain drugs without having to come in contact with you.

The Indian Health Service has expanded telehealth services across its federal facilities. Ask your local provider if they are providing telehealth or telemedicine options to avoid physically going into the doctor's office. In some cases, your provider may prefer you come into the office to be diagnosed.