

# ER Visit Checklist: Be Prepared, Wait Less

## 1. Before You Go: Is This a True Emergency?

### CALL 911 OR GO TO THE ER FOR:

- Chest pain, pressure, or tightness
- Symptoms of a stroke (Facial droop, Arm weakness, Slurred speech)
- Sudden, severe difficulty breathing
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Loss of consciousness
- Severe head or spinal injury
- Sudden, severe "worst headache of your life"
- Major broken bones (bone visible, limb deformed)

### USE URGENT CARE FOR:

- Fevers, flu, and bad colds
- Sprains and strains
- Minor cuts that need stitches
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs)
- Ear infections, sore throat

### USE TELEMEDICINE FOR:

- Prescription refills
- Colds, allergies, pink eye
- Rashes
- General medical questions

## 2. Your "Go-Bag" Essentials

- **Photo ID** (Driver's License)
- **Health Insurance Card**
- **A List of Your Medications:** Include drug name, dosage (mg), and how often you take it.
- **A List of Your Allergies:** (Medications, food, latex, etc.)
- **A List of Your Medical History:** (Past surgeries, chronic conditions like Diabetes, High Blood Pressure)
- **Your Doctor's Name** and contact info
- **Phone and Charger:** (And a battery pack, just in case)
- **Comfort Items:** (Book, headphones, small blanket)

### 3. At the ER: What to Say

When you speak to the triage nurse, be clear and quick.

- **State Your Main Complaint First:** "I have severe abdominal pain," *not* "My day started..."
- **When Did It Start?** Be specific. "It started at 2 PM today."
- **Rate Your Pain:** Use a 1-to-10 scale.
- **Mention Key Symptoms:** (e.g., "I also have a fever and feel dizzy.")
- **Advocate Politely:** If you feel worse while waiting, tell the check-in desk *immediately*.