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# When You Need Immediate Care, It Pays to Know Your Options

Until recently, if you needed immediate medical care, you had only two options: visit an urgent-care center, or go to the hospital emergency room (ER). Each offers a different level of service, so if you truly needed ER services, you were left with just one choice.

Now, there's a third option: the freestanding ER.

## What is a freestanding ER?

A freestanding ER is an ER facility that is not attached to a hospital. They look a lot like urgent-care centers, and you'll find them in locations that are convenient to get to, just like urgent-care centers. The key difference is that freestanding ERs are true emergency rooms that can treat serious—and even life-threatening—injuries and illnesses, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Just like a hospital-based ER, freestanding ERs are staffed by board-certified emergency physicians and nurses, and have advanced imaging capabilities. They are also licensed the same, and the costs are often equal for both types of ERs. But unlike hospital ERs, which get crowded because they draw patients from multiple cities and even remote towns, freestanding ERs draw only local traffic. They offer an alternative that can be safer in terms of social distancing.

It's important to know what kind of care option will work best for your needs. Here's a look at the differences between freestanding ERs and urgent-care centers:

Urgent-Care Centers	Freestanding ERs
Open during the day; sometimes have extended hours and are open weekends	Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year
Diagnose common medical conditions that don't require imaging technology other than X-ray	Diagnose and stabilize a range of conditions, from minor to life-threatening; take CT, X-ray, and ultrasound images
Treat minor injuries and illnesses	Provide the full range of emergency medical services
Staffed by a nurse practitioner, registered nurse, or licensed MD	Offer round-the-clock care from licensed ICU- and ER-trained physicians
Often have shorter wait times than an ER	May offer shorter wait times than a hospital-based ER
Lower pricing than a freestanding or hospital-based ER	Similar pricing to a hospital-based ER

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# Making Smart Care Choices

Think about your health and safety first, and cost second.

	<b>Telehealth</b> (BlueCare Anywhere <sup>SM</sup> )	<b>Retail Clinic</b>	<b>Primary Care Provider (PCP)</b> (telemedicine visits included)	<b>Urgent Care</b>	<b>Hospital or Freestanding Emergency Room (ER)</b>
<b>Symptoms</b>	Not feeling well and want to see a doctor within minutes, from anywhere?	Feel bad but can't get in to see your doctor?	Is it something that can wait?	Not feeling well, and it's on the weekend?	Think it could be a matter of life or limb?
<b>When to go</b>	If you need non-emergency care, BlueCare Anywhere lets you visit with a physician from a smartphone, tablet, or computer.	If you have a non-life-threatening illness or injury and can't get in to see your primary care provider.	When you need routine, non-emergency care or help managing an acute or chronic condition, or help with a referral to a specialist.	If it's the weekend or an evening, and your doctor isn't available, urgent care can help with non-life-threatening medical issues that could become worse if not treated immediately.	When you have a serious medical condition that could be life- or limb-threatening.
<b>Reasons to go</b>	<b>Medical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colds and flus</li> <li>• Diarrhea or vomiting</li> <li>• Sinus, eye, or ear infections</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Rashes</li> <li>• Sprains</li> </ul> <b>Counseling and Psychiatry<sup>1</sup></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insomnia</li> <li>• Anxiety disorders</li> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Stress management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colds and flus</li> <li>• Sinus, ear, or eye infections</li> <li>• Rashes</li> <li>• Flu shots or other vaccines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colds and flus</li> <li>• Sinus, ear, or eye infections</li> <li>• High fever</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Skin irritations/rashes</li> <li>• Minor cuts and burns</li> <li>• Sprains</li> <li>• Minor fractures</li> <li>• Physical exams, vaccines, and health screenings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Colds and flus</li> <li>• High fever</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• "Spreading" skin irritations/rashes</li> <li>• Minor cuts and burns</li> <li>• Sprains</li> <li>• Minor fractures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe chest pain</li> <li>• Difficulty breathing</li> <li>• Ingestion of objects or poisons</li> <li>• Major trauma or injury (such as a broken bone)</li> <li>• Seizures</li> <li>• Severe burns</li> <li>• Severe diarrhea</li> <li>• Uncontrollable bleeding or vomiting blood</li> <li>• Animal bites</li> <li>• Unconsciousness</li> </ul>
<b>Wait time</b>	Available 24/7 and can be conducted anywhere you have access to a smartphone, tablet, or computer with video chat access.	Typically short. May have online check-in.	Minimal for in-person visits, depending on office; minimal for telemedicine visits with scheduled appointment.	Usually shorter than the ER, plus some clinics let you sign in online and then notify you when it nears your appointment time.	Depends on the time of day, but if your situation is a true emergency, you'll be seen/evaluated promptly.
<b>Cost</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$\$</b>	<b>\$\$</b>	<b>\$\$\$</b>
<b>How to get care</b>	Download the <b>BlueCare Anywhere</b> mobile app <sup>2</sup> or visit <b>BlueCareAnywhereAZ.com</b> .	No appointment needed, but calling ahead or scheduling online is always a good idea.	Call your doctor or healthcare provider to make an appointment for either an in-person or a virtual visit. Some offices may offer online scheduling.	Download the <b>MyBlue AZ<sup>SM</sup></b> mobile app <sup>2</sup> to find locations that are covered by your plan.	In an emergency, call 911 or have a friend or family member drive you to the nearest location.

## Find providers, get cost estimates, and more.

Log in to your MyBlue<sup>SM</sup> account at [azblue.com/MyBlue](https://azblue.com/MyBlue) and click the "Find a Doctor" tab to find healthcare providers. There, you can also use the Costs for Procedures tool to get estimates on various treatments such as eye exams, mental health services, and more.

Your health plan covers preventive services such as flu shots, vaccinations, blood pressure checks, and screening tests. Note that you most likely won't pay for preventive services if you use providers in your plan's network. If you're not sure where to go for non-emergency healthcare, use our 24-hour Nurse On Call service at **1-866-422-2729**.

Call 911 in an emergency.

<sup>1</sup>Counseling and psychiatry appointments may take up to 14 days to schedule.

<sup>2</sup>Your wireless plan's phone and data rates may apply. Search for "MyBlue AZ" and "BlueCare Anywhere" in the Google Play™ or Apple® App Store® online marketplaces.

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