

Hendricks Community Hospital strives to serve Hendricks and our surrounding communities. To inform our area patrons, we will be publishing topics in our area newspapers about the services and specialties we offer at our local level. Various topics will be covered throughout the next several months to ensure our community is provided with the best knowledge in making their healthcare choices. Our goal is that you enjoy reading more about the services we provide and feel more confident in your decision-making.



Determining the best route of care: Emergency Room vs. Clinic by Kennedy Tesch

In many situations, injury or illness can occur out of the blue. For example, your child falls and breaks an arm, your husband experiences chest pains in the middle of the night, or you break out in hives and have difficulty breathing. Any of these types of occurrences can warrant an abundance of physical pain and anxiety. It is important to know how to deal with these situations and be able to determine the proper path of care.

Clinic visits are reserved for patients that do not have an acute life-threatening medical issue. Problems are addressed that may be new but are not life-threatening. The same lab, x-rays and evaluation may be undertaken in the clinic that can be done in the emergency room. The situation can still be attended to but is not a life-threatening situation. Usually, an appointment can be scheduled and most often the problem can be addressed quickly.

The clinic is also best used for routine rechecks and for medication refills or to have your labs checked to support the need for certain medications. Also, the providers will see patients for minor injuries or illnesses that can occur such as fever; vomiting and/or diarrhea or flu-like symptoms; cold or cough symptoms; minor strains or sprains; small cuts and controlled bleeding; painful or frequent urination; ear pain; eye redness or drainage; bug bites; allergy symptoms; minor headaches; rashes; muscle or back pain.

Many of the same tests can be done in the clinic as the ER, and the clinic charges are much less. A patient can always call the clinic if it is open, and the staff can direct them to go to the ER if they feel the clinic is not appropriate.

“The clinic/hospital are always available to answer questions to determine if this patient should come to the emergency room and be seen in the ER or come to the clinic to be evaluated,” said HCHA healthcare provider, Tabb McCluskey, DO.

The emergency room visits are usually reserved for patients that feel they have a life-threatening or severe medical issues. This may include any serious medical issue such as, but not limited to traumas like crashes or cuts, seizures, someone found unresponsive or someone who is severely short of breath or having chest pain.

It is appropriate to call 911 anytime someone feels that there is a condition that requires immediate health care to save a life such as chest pain; any breathing difficulty; seizure activity; severe uncontrolled bleeding; fainting or loss of consciousness; serious burns; severe head injury with loss of consciousness or confusion; severe abdominal pain; poisoning; swelling of lips, tongue, throat or face; vision impairment; signs of stroke: difficulty speaking, weakness on one side of body, numbness, vision changes; fall or injury with dislocated limb or complicated fracture that is deformed or has open skin; loss of limb.

“If someone has an illness or injury, and absolutely has no ride to the hospital, they can call 911 for an ambulance, but insurance may not cover it if it is not emergent,” said HCHA healthcare provider, Brenda Bullerman, PAC.

For treatment of an illness when the clinic is not open, the patient can go to urgent care if one is open or come to the emergency room if urgent care is not available. Many insurances have a higher co-pay if patients come to the ER, and it is not an emergency.

If you are questioning which route to take when determining a course of care, you may call 507-275-3134 to be directed to a healthcare provider who will then help determine which path is best suited for you and your situation.