



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Urgent Care vs. Emergency Room: How Do You Decide?

LAS VEGAS – Flu and other respiratory illnesses continue to circulate in the community and it is sometimes difficult for the public to determine whether it is appropriate to go to an emergency department, an urgent care center or their primary care physician. The Southern Nevada Health District is offering the following tips in order to help ensure emergency care remains as efficient and effective as possible.

It is important to note that the elderly or persons with medical condition such as diabetes, heart disease or asthma, should speak with their primary care physician for advice about symptoms that may require emergency, urgent or routine care.

Symptoms that generally indicate an emergency include:

- Uncontrollable bleeding
- Head injury or broken bones
- Poisoning or suspected overdose
- Inability to breathe or shortness of breath
- Seizure or loss of consciousness
- Persistent chest or abdominal pain or pressure
- Numbness or paralysis of an arm or leg
- Sudden slurred speech, visual changes or weakness
- Major burns
- Intense pain
- Severe reaction to an insect bite, medication or food

Persons experiencing a situation requiring prompt medical attention, that is not life-threatening, may receive faster care at an urgent care clinic or by scheduling a same-day appointment with their primary care physician, if available.

Urgent care symptoms may include:

- Moderate fever
- Colds, cough or flu
- Bruises, abrasions and minor cuts
- Minor burns

(more)

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- Eye, ear or skin infections
- Sprains or strains
- Urinary tract infections
- Respiratory infections

Flu shots are still recommended for anyone who has not yet obtained one and the health district has an ample supply of the vaccine. Influenza vaccinations are recommended for anyone over six months of age. Flu shots are especially important for those at high risk of complications from the disease, such as those over age 50 and individuals who suffer from chronic diseases as well as their care givers and household contacts. It takes about two weeks to build sufficient immunity to influenza following a flu shot. Flu season generally peaks in Southern Nevada in February and can continue into May.

Flu shots are available Monday – Friday between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at these district public health centers:

- Ravenholt Public Health Center, 625 Shadow Lane, Las Vegas
 - East Las Vegas Public Health Center, 560 N. Nellis Blvd., Suite E12, Las Vegas
 - Henderson Public Health Center, 520 E. Lake Mead Parkway, Henderson
 - North Las Vegas Public Health Center, 1820 E. Lake Mead Blvd., Suite F, North Las Vegas
 - Spring Valley Public Health Center, 6330 W. Spring Mountain Rd., Ste. C, Las Vegas
- (All services at Spring Valley, including immunizations, are available by appointment only. Call 759-0701)

The health district reminds the community to practice good health habits to minimize the spread of disease, including influenza:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Additionally, when you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect their health.
- Stay home when you are sick. Staying away from work, school, and errands when you are sick will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- When you sneeze or cough, use a tissue or the crook of your arm. Covering your mouth and nose prevents the spread and keeps those around you from getting sick.
- Wash your hands frequently. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

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