

## URGENT CARE VS EMERGENCY ROOM

Lexile 550L

People go to *urgent care* when they are sick or injured. People also go to an *emergency room* when they need medical help. Urgent care is different, though. It is for medical problems that are not serious. Emergency rooms are for very serious medical problems. Nurses and doctors are at both kinds of places. But an emergency room has more medical equipment. Urgent care centers are outside of hospitals. Emergency rooms are inside of hospitals. Urgent care visits cost much less than emergency room visits.

### Similarities




Urgent care centers and emergency rooms are alike in some ways. They both have doctors and nurses to help patients. They can give some types of medications to patients. Both places usually have some medical testing equipment. An **X-ray** is a kind of medical testing machine. X-rays can see through a person's skin. Doctors use X-rays to look for broken bones. They can also use them to see organs. Urgent care centers and emergency rooms also have labs. People get blood tests in labs. Labs can test for diseases.

### Urgent Care Centers

Urgent care centers are different from emergency rooms. They do not treat serious illnesses or injuries. They can only treat minor problems. They can treat pain and infections. But they cannot treat someone who has been seriously injured in a car accident. An urgent care center does not have advanced testing machines. And the staff can only give people basic medications.

People should go to urgent care for minor problems. They should go there if they have the flu or an ear infection. They should go there if they have a headache or body aches. They can get help for a bee sting or an animal bite there. They can also get help treating a bad cold or **asthma**. Asthma is a condition that causes breathing problems.

Urgent care centers save time and money. It costs less to visit an urgent care center than an emergency room. Some centers require a **co-pay**. This is money a patient must pay at the time of care. It is usually money that is not covered by **health insurance**. Health insurance pays for medical care. Urgent care centers are not always open. People cannot get care when they are closed.

Urgent Care	Emergency Room
<b>TYPES OF TREATMENT</b> Pain, infection, bad cold, flu, headache, body ache, bee sting, animal bite, asthma	 Burn, broken bone, chest pain, confusion, weakness in arms and legs, drug overdose
<b>WAIT TIME</b> Short wait, not always open	 Possible long wait, open any time
<b>PRICE</b> Lower cost	 Much higher cost

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Emergency rooms can treat serious injuries and illnesses. They have advanced testing equipment. They can give people all types of medications. People should go to an emergency room if they have a serious burn. They should go if they have a broken bone or chest pain. If people feel confused or have weakness in the arms or legs, they should go to the emergency room right away. People who have taken too many drugs should be taken to the emergency room. Some people go to the emergency room in an **ambulance**. This is a vehicle with medical equipment. Paramedics are also in an ambulance. These are people trained in emergency medical care.

Emergency rooms have access to high-tech tools. They have brain and body scanning machines. These machines can see into the body without having to cut it open. Patients in an emergency room may need surgery. They are admitted, or let in, to the hospital for this.

People can go to an emergency room any time. They are usually open twenty-four hours a day. They are open seven days a week. People with minor problems may also go to an emergency room. They may go there when urgent care centers are closed. Emergency rooms can handle any kind of medical problem.

Emergency rooms provide patients with a higher level of care. This means emergency services cost more. Emergency room visits can involve many costs. Health insurance should cover at least some of these costs. The cost of emergency care can be very high for people without insurance.

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**■ By Cait Caffrey**

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## COMPREHENSION TEST

### Multiple-Choice Questions

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1. People would most likely go to an emergency room to treat a
    - A. bee sting.
    - B. serious burn.
    - C. common cold.
    - D. mild burn.
  2. People would most likely go to urgent for treatment of
    - A. an earache.
    - B. a head injury.
    - C. a severe burn.
    - D. severe stomach pain.
  3. Which statement describes only emergency care?
    - A. It is run by doctors and nurses.
    - B. It can provide medications.
    - C. It can give a brain scan.
    - D. It can give an X-ray.
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### Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

4. An \_\_\_\_\_ is a vehicle that takes people to an emergency room.
5. An \_\_\_\_\_ can see through a person's skin.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ is a service that helps people pay for medical bills.

## COMPREHENSION TEST ANSWERS

### Multiple-Choice Questions

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A. bee sting.  
**B. serious burn.**  
C. common cold.  
D. mild burn.

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2. People would most likely go to urgent for treatment of  
**A. an earache.**  
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C. a severe burn.  
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3. Which statement describes only emergency care?  
A. It is run by doctors and nurses.  
B. It can provide medications.  
**C. It can give a brain scan.**  
D. It can give an X-ray.

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### Fill-in-the-Blank Questions

4. An ambulance is a vehicle that takes people to an emergency room.
5. An X-ray can see through a person's skin.
6. Health insurance helps people pay for medical bills.