

WHERE DO I GO?
(Do I need to go to the Emergency Room?)

This article is a summary of “Where Do I Go?” available on our website www.sdumc.org/caring.html. For medical advice, consult your doctor.

It’s Saturday afternoon, and you’re not feeling well. You’ve had a pain since yesterday, You’ve tried over-the-counter (OTC) medications, but the pain is still there. Your physician’s office is closed till Monday, but you don’t think you can wait. Where do you go? Do you need to go to the Emergency Room (ER)? Is it a medical emergency?

The first thing to do is to call your doctor. Describe your situation, and he/she may do one or more of the following: Explain why your symptoms are not worrisome and do not require treatment other than OTC medication; call in a prescription; advise you to be seen in the office on Monday; advise you to go to Urgent Care (UC) or ER;. Rarely would they advise you to call 911.

Of course, if you experience any symptoms which you believe to be life-threatening or a true medical emergency, do not hesitate, seek medical care immediately. - Severe chest pain, Significant difficulty breathing, Severe, uncontrolled bleeding, Sudden severe pain anywhere lasting longer than 30 minutes, Symptoms of stroke (numbness/weakness/tingling on one side of the body, drooping of one side of the face, slurred speech) But since most medical issues are not life-threatening, what are your options? You can **Call your Dr. or Nurse line** listed on some insurance cards, **Go to a Walk-in clinic.** Many local drug stores offer this service where you can see a Nurse Practitioner (NP) without an apt. **Go to an Urgent Care facility.** They have a shorter waiting time than an ER and offer many of the same services. **Go to an ER** only if it is a true medical emergency that cannot wait, your life is in danger, or you have been directed there by one of the above.

Remember, most health problems are NOT emergencies. Always call your doctor first and they will advise you accordingly as to the BEST place for you to get help for your problem.