About our Emergency Department
Is the Emergency Department my best option for care?

**Things To Consider**

Patients in Ontario have many choices for getting immediate and unscheduled care. These include:

- Walk-in clinics
- Family health teams
- Emergency departments
- Family practice offices that have extended and weekend hours.

You can find information about where you can get immediate and unscheduled care in your area, instead of visiting the ER, at [www.onotario.ca/healthcareoptions](http://www.onotario.ca/healthcareoptions).
How do I choose where to go for care?

- **For minor problems** like coughs and colds, minor injuries, and more long-standing or chronic medical problems, you can get care at a family care provider’s office or a walk-in clinic.

- **For medical problems which are more serious and require immediate medical attention (e.g., x-rays, laboratory testing or treatment),** you may need to visit an emergency department or a walk-in clinic that offers these services. Some walk-in clinics can provide services like sutures and splints. Others cannot.

- **If you have time, consider calling Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.** Telehealth Ontario is a free and confidential telephone service that you can call for advice on whether you need to get emergency care or whether another option is right for you. You can call Telehealth Ontario 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
If I must seek care at ER, how much time will it take?

Many things may affect how much time you will spend in an ER:

- **The seriousness of your condition** - A nurse, specially trained in emergency care (called a “triage nurse”), will examine you to find out how serious your condition is. **Please note:** A triage nurse has special training in emergency care. This way, the ER doctors and nurses can treat you based on the type and severity of the signs and symptoms you are exhibiting. This process helps make sure that the patients who are in most urgent need of care are seen first.
Other factors that impact the length of time you may be in ER.

- **When you go to the ER** - The time of day and what day of the week you arrive may affect the time you spend in the ER.

- **The size and location of the hospital you visit** - Larger hospitals in cities tend to be busier. They see more patients and tend to see people who are in more urgent need of care than small hospitals that are in rural areas.

- **Unforeseen circumstances** – If there is a big accident in the area or an infectious disease outbreak, this can cause longer than usual delays and may increase the time you spend in an ER.

- **If you need to be admitted to hospital for treatment of your condition** - You may have to spend more time being cared for in the ER until an inpatient hospital bed becomes available.
Understanding the “triage” system

• An Emergency Department differs significantly from a walk-in clinic or physicians office where there may be a number system or an appointment time.

• Emergency departments have a triage system. When you come in to the Emergency and see the triage nurse, he or she determines the severity of your symptoms.

• Determining the type and severity of each patient’s presenting signs and symptoms ensures that the sickest patients are seen first.
How can we work together?

We know it can be frustrating to wait for long periods of time when you are feeling unwell or injured. We ask for your patience and understanding.

While you can’t see what’s happening within the department, we are caring for many patients with diverse conditions and needs. We commit to caring for you as quickly as we can.

*Please let the triage know right away if your condition has worsened or if you are experiencing additional symptoms.*
Be Involved in Your Health Care

1. Speak up if you have questions or concerns about your care.
2. Tell a member of your health care team about your past illnesses and your current health conditions.
3. Bring all your medicines in their original containers with you when you come to the hospital or to another medical appointment.
4. Tell a member of your health care team if you have ever had an allergic or bad reaction to any medicine or food.
5. Make sure you know what to do when you go home from the hospital. If you do not understand the instructions you are given for follow-up care, please ask the physician or nurse to explain.
Patient Support Principles

We know that being a patient in Emergency can be scary. We want to make sure you have the support you need to reduce your anxiety through this experience.

- We do not have set visiting hours at QHC, but rather will work with you to determine who you wish to have by your side during care.
- We do recommend a maximum of 2 people to ensure you are supported, but mindful of the privacy of others and to ensure your care team can provide care efficiently.
- If it’s necessary, we may need to ask your loved ones to step out during a test or procedure. You and your loved ones will be informed why, and be provided with an estimated timeframe for when you will be called by into the care area.
QHC is committed to delivering care that is guided by these values:

• **Compassion** (Imagine It’s You): My family and I will be shown empathy, patience and respect in every interaction, especially at our most vulnerable. I can feel confident that QHC is striving to consistently meet my expectations throughout my entire hospital experience. I will feel protected in a clean, comfortable and safe environment.

• **Respect** (Respect Everyone): I know that my personal dignity and privacy will be respected. Regardless of who I am, and what my abilities may be, I will receive fair and accessible treatment that balances the competing needs of all patients.

• **Accountability** (Take Ownership): I will have the opportunity to express concerns and get answers to my questions. I will be immediately informed if an error is made and the process to correct the error will be explained to me.
QHC is committed to delivering care that is guided by these values:

- **Teamwork (We all help provide care)**: I will be given complete information about my diagnosis and treatment in a way that I can understand, so that my family and I can be active participants in my care and make informed decisions. My health care team will collaborate with each other and with others outside of the organization to optimize my personal health and abilities while I am at the hospital and to plan my discharge home.

- **Learning (Always strive to improve)**: I can feel confident that I am receiving the best possible care the hospital can deliver, using up-to-date knowledge and the intelligent use of available resources. My care will be provided in the safest way possible to reduce the likelihood of errors or harm. QHC will learn from my patient experience to improve the care provided to others.
What we ask of you.

• **Compassion (Imagine It’s You)**: Treat staff, volunteers other patients and families with understanding and dignity. Try to be flexible and understand that not all answers can be provided right away.

• **Respect (Respect Everyone)**: Follow hospital rules and treat hospital property with care.

• **Accountability (Take Ownership)**: Ask questions when you do not understand. Share your concerns with us. Strive to attend your appointments and inform us of any changes to your schedule.

• **Teamwork (We all help provide care)**: Listen openly to the information provided by your health care team. As family members at QHC, provide comfort and support in the special ways that only families can.

• **Learning (Always strive to improve)**: Acknowledge the important role QHC has in education and contribute to the experiences of students and learners. Let us know how we can improve the quality of care at QHC.
Prescriptions for Narcotics or Sleeping Medication

Please note: This emergency department will not renew prescriptions for narcotics or sleeping medications.

Under certain circumstances a one-time prescription may be provided, and only if the physician is able to determine through assessment that the prescription is medically indicated.
Additional Information:

• A fee is charged for medical equipment not covered by OHIP (e.g., crutches, cervical collars). The physician will charge $15.00 for return to work and sick notes.

• Please be respectful of our staff, volunteers and other patients and visitors who may also be waiting and feeling anxious.
Hand washing is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infection.

Steps to proper hand washing:
- Use warm running water and soap.
- Rub hands together briskly for 15 seconds.
- Rinse hands thoroughly and dry well.
- Use paper towel to turn off the tap.
- Alcohol hand rinse is easily accessible for hand washing, but should not be used if your hands are visibly soiled.

When to wash your hands:
- Before and after visiting a patient;
- After coughing or blowing your nose;
- After using the washroom; and
- Before eating.

Please inform the nurse if you have a cough or fever and put a mask on. A mask can help prevent the spread of infections.