

## Can my family visit me in the treatment area?

To preserve the privacy of all our patients, family members are allowed to wait with you in your treatment room. We ask that they stay at your bedside. If the emergency department becomes full, or if a caregiver feels that you need privacy, your family members may be asked to return to the waiting area.

## What happens when I am discharged?

When you are discharged, you will be given instructions on how to care for yourself and given a number to call if you have continued problems. You may be instructed to seek follow up care a physician outside the emergency system. You will be responsible for your own transportation home.

## How can I help the process along?

Knowing your current medications, drug allergies and past medical history is very important information that helps us care for you. Keeping a preprinted list helps share details that may not be remembered when you are ill or worried about loved ones. Ask for one of our Safe Medication Management brochures.

**Our goal is to provide each patient with emergency medical care of the highest quality. If you are dissatisfied with the care you receive at any time during your stay, please inform your nurse or doctor before you leave so that we can address any concerns you may have.**

## Give us your feedback!

After you are treated and released, you may receive a survey regarding your recent experience in our emergency department. Please complete the survey and return it as soon as possible. We value and appreciate your feedback, and we will use your comments to identify areas where we can improve. We also encourage you to recognize any of our staff members who may have gone above and beyond in providing your care.



611 Sherman Avenue East  
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538  
Phone: (920) 568-5000

[FortHealthCare.com](http://FortHealthCare.com)



# What to expect in the Emergency Department

*Caring for Life*

## Fort Healthcare Emergency Department Questions and Answers

To help you understand what to expect during an emergency department visit, we have provided answers to some commonly asked questions.

Our skilled and qualified emergency care teams will give you and your family the best care possible.

### Why do patients have to wait for treatment in the emergency department?

People wait in the emergency department for many reasons. Some of these include:

- Waiting while the sickest patients are seen first.
- Overcrowding due to epidemics such as the flu or ambulance diversions. Also, unlike a doctor's office where appointments are scheduled, many emergency patients may arrive at once.
- Waiting for radiology and laboratory results. (Some test results take longer than others.)
- Waiting for consultations from specialist physicians.

### How long can I expect to be in the emergency department?

The very best care takes time. A triage nurse will grade your condition by severity. Patients with life-threatening conditions such as a stroke or heart attack are seen first.

Once in the treatment area, your total stay may depend on your symptoms, illness and whether you have to be admitted to the hospital. Also, if the emergency physician consults with a specialist or you have special tests and X-rays taken, your stay may be longer.

### Why do some patients get seen before others?

We must care for critical patients with life-threatening conditions first. If you have a minor illness or injury, you may have to wait while sicker or more severely injured patients are seen first.

### What is triage?

You may hear the word triage (pronounced "tree-ahj") when you enter the emergency department. The triage process determines who needs to be seen first. A triage nurse will determine the severity of a patient's condition, based on symptoms. In addition, when a patient first comes to the emergency department, personal and medical history information will be obtained, and vital signs will be checked, including temperature, heart rate and blood pressure.

### Do extensive waiting times affect treatment outcomes?

Our emergency staff works very hard to make sure no one waits so long it will affect the severity of illness or injury. Some patients may wait longer than we would like, but we do our best to make sure the sickest patients are seen first and that all patients are treated as quickly as possible.

An empty waiting room doesn't mean that the emergency department is not busy assisting patients. For example, patients who arrive by ambulance enter the emergency department through a different entrance. Also, many important "behind the scenes" activities take place in the emergency department that patients do not always see, such as processing lab and other test results.

### What is Urgent Care?

Urgent Care service is for minor and stable conditions that do not require intense or multiple resources for treatment.

We offer Urgent Care services from 5 p.m. to 11p.m. Monday - Friday and 12 noon to 11 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. During these hours you may be evaluated by the triage nurse to qualify for Urgent Care services. You may only be assigned to Urgent Care if your condition meets specific criteria. Our triage nurses and doctors are well trained to keep treatment at the appropriate level of care and make adjustments from Urgent Care to Emergency Care when a patient's condition becomes more complicated.

### How long does it take to get laboratory and radiology results?

Our lab and radiology departments support the entire hospital, often responding to inpatient emergencies. They are very focused on returning test results to the emergency department as quickly as possible. The time required for your specific test results will vary according to your testing needs. Staff are dedicated to providing swift and accurate results for every test performed.

### Who will be caring for me?

As a patient in the emergency department, you will be cared for by a team of highly skilled professionals. These include the following:

- A medical doctor (M.D.) has overall responsibility for your care. A doctor sees each and every patient. Doctors talk to the laboratory, nurses and other doctors as necessary.
- A registered nurse (R.N.) will assess and monitor your physical condition, give you your medication, maintain your IV and keep you and your family informed of any tests and procedures. Your nurse will also provide you with important discharge information before you go home. Each nurse is responsible for several patients and works very closely with your doctor to provide the best care possible for you.
- Other department technicians may work with you, your nurse, and doctor. Other technicians include CNAs, EMTs, radiology, laboratory, and respiratory professionals.