

Wellness Connection

Emergency Care Vs. Urgent Care: How to Decide



Knowing where to go in an emergency is key to getting the best treatment possible. And it isn't always the emergency room (ER). Urgent care centers are walk-in clinics designed to treat minor injuries and illnesses when you can't wait to get to the doctor. You don't need an appointment, and many times you can get treated faster—and at a lower cost—than in the ER.

Here's how to know where to go.

WHEN TO CHOOSE THE ER

The ER is open 24 hours to treat serious, life-and-death problems. Get to the ER right away if you or a family member has sudden symptoms such as:

- Difficulty breathing
- Fainting
- Chest pain or pressure
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Severe pain
- Slurred speech
- Facial drooping or weakness in an arm or leg

Major injuries, such as to the head or back, also require emergency care, as do severe burns, seizures, and instances of poisoning or choking.

WHEN TO SEEK URGENT CARE

Most urgent care centers are open nights and weekends, making them a convenient choice for issues such as:

- Ear or sinus pain
- Burning with urination
- Minor cuts and burns
- Animal bites
- Rashes
- Sprains and strains
- Minor fever and sore throat

Urgent care centers offer many of the same services as the ER, such as x-ray and blood testing, but they don't treat life-threatening conditions. ■

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Upset Stomach? Take Back Control

One in five Americans has irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). The list of symptoms includes bloating, gas, cramping, diarrhea, and constipation. Regain command with these tips:

- **Soothe stress**, which can bring on IBS bouts. Try meditation, reflecting in a journal, or exercising.
- **Change your diet.** Eat a variety of healthy, high-fiber foods, including whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- **Try probiotics.** These helpful bacteria—found in supplements and yogurt—may ease IBS. Ask your doctor for advice on them.

Your doctor might also suggest other solutions, such as medication, if IBS is limiting your life.

how to reach us

From a simple phone call to following our tweets, there are more ways than ever to connect with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska.

Call Member Services at 888-592-8960, Monday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Write to us at P.O. Box 3248, Omaha, NE 68180-0001.

Visit our website at nebraskablue.com.

Follow us on Twitter @BCBSNebraska.

Watch our videos at youtube.com/nebraskabluecross.



Coping After a Traumatic Event

Sadness, grief, and anxiety are normal after a traumatic event. Focusing on your strengths and getting help can help you recover.

People who witness a natural disaster, serve in combat, or fall victim to violence often struggle with emotional or psychological trauma. They may experience anger, hopelessness, confusion, withdrawal, or numbness for weeks or months afterward.

Fortunately, you can take steps to feel better, including the following.

- **Spend time with other people.** Being alone can make you feel worse. Instead, maintain close relationships with family and friends who can help you heal.
- **Seek support.** Speaking with a clergy member, trusted family member, or counselor about your emotions can help you feel better. So can joining a support group for trauma survivors.
- **Stick to a daily routine.** Doing so can help you feel grounded and in control.
- **Adopt healthy habits.** Getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and avoiding alcohol and drugs can help you cope with your mental stress.
- **Spend time doing things you enjoy.** Activities such as gardening, reading, taking photographs, going fishing, or doing crafts can be restorative.
- **Live in the present.** Being mindful—not regretting the past or worrying about the future—can help you feel better. Focus on what you’re doing, seeing, and feeling in each moment.
- **Learn and practice relaxation exercises.** Deep breathing, meditating, or listening to relaxation recordings can help tame tension.
- **Replace negative thoughts with positive ones.** For example, if you find yourself thinking you’ll never get over your trauma, replace that thought with “I am feeling better every day.” ■

When to Get Help

Speak with a mental health professional if, despite self-help strategies:

- You continue to feel overwhelmed, anxious, fearful, depressed, or disconnected from others.
- You have trouble functioning at work or home.
- You are experiencing flashbacks or nightmares.

DEFENSE! DEFENSE!

Tips for Safe and Healthy Tailgating

Score with the hometown crowd by safely preparing and serving lighter tailgating fare.

STAY IN THE SAFETY ZONE

These tips can help you avoid passing food-borne illness to your guests:

- Wash your hands before, during, and after you prepare food. Bring moist towelettes or antibacterial gel if soap and water won't be available when tailgating.
- Defrost meat at home in the refrigerator—never on the counter or outside at the party.
- Tightly seal raw meat in plastic wrap or zip-seal bags. Even better, use one cooler for meat and another for vegetables, fruit, and other foods.
- Bring a food thermometer. Burgers should be cooked to 160 degrees; chicken breasts to 165 degrees. (See the graphic below for more guidelines.) Don't partially cook or grill foods at home to speed cooking time at the game. Bacteria could multiply in between.
- Pack perishable foods in a clean cooler that's been chilled with ice or cold packs. Refrigerate or freeze foods before packing to ensure they stay cold.
- Keep your cooler as cold as possible. Avoid transporting it in a hot vehicle trunk. Once you arrive, keep it under a table or in another shady location.

- Throw away perishable foods that have been unrefrigerated for more than two hours.

TAKE A PASS ON HEAVY FOODS

Lighten up your game-day menu with these suggestions:

- Make chili with extra-lean ground beef or ground turkey and plenty of beans.
- Grill skinless chicken or turkey breasts or fresh mushrooms, zucchini, onions, and peppers. Fish and seafood are also healthy choices because they're high in omega-3 fatty acids. Use a grilling rack so that fat drips away from the food.
- Serve green leaf or fruit salads with low-fat dressings instead of mayo-based pasta or potato salad. Add toasted walnuts instead of croutons.
- Skip the potato chips in favor of carrot sticks, celery, cherry tomatoes, and broccoli florets to go along with a low-fat dip.
- Cut back on salty seasonings by using lemon juice, herbs, and spices instead.
- Choose low-fat or reduced-fat cheese for sandwiches, salads, and burger toppings.
- Instead of baked goods for dessert, grill fruit. Fresh pineapple slices, nectarines, peaches, and plums are easy to prepare and loaded with nutrition. ■



Blender Bean Dip

No dairy makes this dip a safer bet for outdoor parties and fall barbecues.

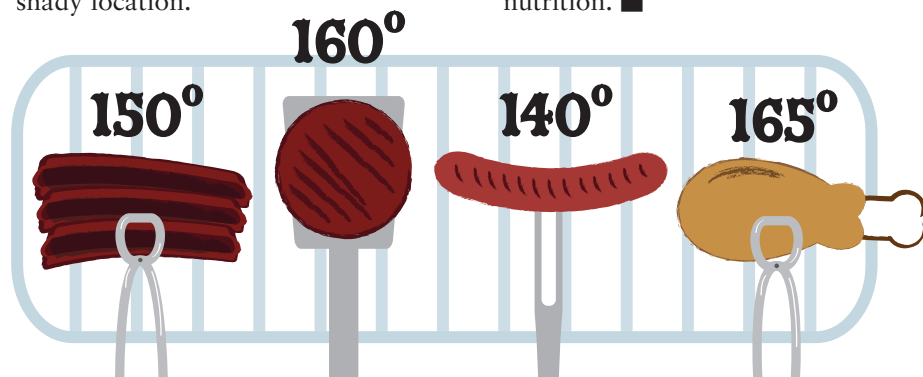
Ingredients

- 1 15.5-oz. can of beans (red kidney beans, navy beans, or black beans)
- 1 14.5-oz. can of diced tomatoes with chilies and spices added
- 1 tbsp. powdered cumin
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- ½ cup fresh cilantro

Directions

Drain and rinse beans and put into blender. Drain tomatoes and add to blender. Add cumin, chili powder, and cilantro. Blend to desired consistency. Refrigerate until ready to serve with baked corn chips or toasted whole wheat pita triangles.

Serves four; serving size is ½ cup. Each serving provides: Calories 56; Fat <1 g; Cholesterol 0 mg; Sodium 492 mg; Carbohydrates 10 g; Fiber 4 g; Protein 3 g.



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OUR COMMUNITY



New Bike-Sharing Program Available in Omaha

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska is a proud sponsor of B-cycle, a bike-sharing program that gives you access to bicycles around town.

B-cycle allows you to borrow a bike from one kiosk—called a B-station—and return it to any other kiosk you like. The B-cycle program is designed to make it easy and convenient for you to run errands and other short trips by biking instead of driving.

Swipe your credit card at a B-station to start a 24-hour pass, or purchase a 30-day or annual membership online. Students and seniors can qualify for special discounts. **Visit omaha.bcycle.com, or call 402-957-2453.**

Vaccinations Now Available at Participating Pharmacies

You can reduce your chances of getting the flu, shingles, or pneumococcal disease by getting vaccinated. And Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska (BCBSNE) is helping make it easier to get those vaccinations.

BCBSNE health plan¹ members can now get the flu, Zostavax (shingles), or Pneumovax (pneumococcal disease) vaccines at participating pharmacies in Nebraska or across the nation.² Simply present your BCBSNE member I.D. card at the pharmacy and pay according to your plan's prescription drug coverage. The pharmacy administers the vaccination and files the claim.

Please visit nebraskablue.com for a list of participating pharmacies in Nebraska. Please note: Not all pharmacies may carry the listed vaccines.

If you have questions, call Member Services at the number on the back of your member I.D. card.

¹Only applies to BCBSNE members with pharmacy benefits through Prime Therapeutics LLC, an independent company providing pharmacy benefit management services for BCBSNE

²Vaccine coverage is subject to contract limitations and/or Medical Policy