

# Signs You Need Medical Care

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**Worrisome health symptoms can show up unexpectedly.** When you're concerned but unsure the problem warrants a health care visit, call your health care provider's office and ask about it. Many medical offices have staff available to answer these calls.

**Generally, we see our primary care providers (PCP) for non-emergency symptoms and preventive care.** Your PCP knows you best and can provide continuous care. Examples of non-emergency conditions: persistent symptoms such as urination or bowel changes, unintentional weight loss, emotional changes, joint pain, congestion or coughing.

**For urgent problems after office hours,** learn your provider's procedure. If you can't see your provider, here are tips for getting medical care:

**1. Call 9-1-1** for life-threatening conditions such as severe chest pain or stroke.

Serious conditions include:

- Difficulty breathing.
- A possible heart attack: chest pain, which may radiate to an arm or jaw, with sweating, vomiting or dizziness.
- A possible stroke: facial drooping; weakness or numbness on 1 side of the body; sudden trouble with walking, talking or vision; sudden severe headache; or loss of consciousness.
- An injury that threatens life or limb.

**2. Go to the emergency room (ER):** Following are some reasons to use an ER. Have someone drive you to the ER or call 9-1-1 if you have:

- Heart attack or stroke signs (noted above).
- Sudden confusion or a change in mental status.
- Serious burns or a fever with rash.
- A head injury or concussion; an eye injury.
- Fainting or seizures.
- Severe cuts that may need sutures; facial lacerations.
- Fractures or dislocated joints.
- Severe cold or flu symptoms.
- Bleeding during pregnancy.
- Severe abdominal pain with or without vomiting.

**3. Is it simple and affordable?** A sign of failure is spending too much time sourcing ingredients and too much money on them. The plan needs to fit your lifestyle.

**4. Does it support physical activity?** Eating well is only part of the equation. Regular exercise is important for reducing disease risk, maintaining a healthy weight and improving your mood.

**5. Does it provide the nutrition that your body needs?** It's important that the food you choose is both enjoyable and nourishing. Restricting food can lead to nutrient



