A GUIDE FOR PARENTS:
Pediatrician or Emergency Department?

One of the most common questions parents have is when to take their child to the Emergency Department or to their pediatrician.



PEDIATRICIAN

Pediatricians can help parents decide if their child needs care right away or if it can wait until the next day. All Children's National Primary Care offices offer support after regular business hours. Families can speak with an on-call provider or schedule a HelloPeds telemedicine visit by calling their pediatrician's office and following the phone prompts. **Parents should call if their child has any of the following:**

- Abdominal pain
- Allergic reactions
- Behavioral concerns
- Colds, coughs and fevers
- Ear pain
- High fever
- Immunizations
- Medication refills
- Minor cuts or burns
- Rashes
- Seasonal allergies
- Severe cough
- Signed school notes
- Skin infections
- Sore throat
- Strains and sprains
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea



EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Children's National Emergency Department is open 24/7 to provide hands-on care, even when urgent care is closed. Parents should take their child to the Emergency Department for serious or life-threatening injuries or illnesses. **Some examples include:**

- Active suicidal thoughts
- Anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction)
- Difficulty breathing
- Ingestion of poisonous/ toxic substances
- Loss of consciousness
- Major cuts or burns
- Possible broken bones
- Seizures
- Severe abdominal pain
- Severe headache
- Severe vomiting
- Trauma (serious physical injury caused by an external force)