

A **Paramedic/LPN** may also provide care and treatment. Our Paramedics are highly skilled and have been trained to provide extensive emergent care. Our LPNs are IV Certified and tout many years of Emergency Department experience.

Other department technicians may work with you, your nurses, paramedic, and/or doctor. Other technicians include radiology, laboratory, and respiratory treatments.



Can family members visit patients in the treatment area?

Two family members are allowed to wait in the treatment room. They *must stay at your bedside and not in the hallways (to provide privacy and safety for the entire department).* If the emergency department becomes full, or if a caregiver feels that patient privacy is warranted, family members may be asked to return to the waiting area.



What happens when patients are discharged?

When discharged, we provide instructions for follow-up care and a number to call if you have continued problems. You may be instructed to follow up with your primary care physician. **You will be responsible for your own transportation home and may not be allowed to drive an automobile if you have received certain medications.**



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

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 that we can improve.

We also encourage you to recognize any of our staff members who may have gone above and beyond in delivering your care.



Henry County Medical Center

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Emergency Department

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Emergency Department

Questions & Answers

What to expect in the Emergency Department



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 team 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.
- Shortages of inpatient beds in the hospital, resulting in patients remaining longer than expected in the emergency department.



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, heart attack, or traumatic injuries 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.

The time of day and the day of the week may also determine how busy the emergency department is. Typically, the emergency department is busiest between 3 pm and 11 pm. Weekends and Mondays are usually the busiest days of the week.



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. All emergency personnel have been trained to provide accurate triage assessments.



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.



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

To accurately diagnose your condition, we need time to review any lab and radiology tests. Most laboratory and radiology results could take approximately two hours. However, some tests take longer to process than others.



Who provides care and medical treatment?

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.