



Health Care Centers

Getting medical care during emergencies

What is a health care center?

Health care centers are established to treat or house the sick and injured during a public health emergency or other disaster. (Health care centers are sometimes called alternate care facilities.)

Where are the health care centers?

Health care centers will be in a variety of places in a community – a church, a school, etc. The location and number of centers in each community will depend on the size and complexity of the emergency.

Who can go to a health care center?

Anyone can seek help at an emergency health care center. However, depending on the type of emergency, some people may be asked to go to another location like a hospital, clinic, their family physician or other health care professional.

Why can't I go to a hospital?

There are several reasons why a hospital might not be the right place. During an emergency, hospitals may be full or overwhelmed by the number of sick and injured. Health care centers would be able to help alleviate some of that overcrowding.

It may be best to separate those with certain types of illness or injury – some at the health care centers, others at the hospital.

How long will I be at the health care center?

Depending on the nature of the emergency or your type of illness or injury, you may only need to spend a short time in the health care center. A more serious injury and illness may require you to stay overnight up to a few days.

Can I stay at the health care center with my family member?

You may help your family member or friend to the health care center and stay with them during their assessment. If your family member is admitted for overnight or long-term hospitalization, visitation may not be allowed or be very limited.

My pet is injured or sick. Will the health care center help my pet?

Pets are not allowed in health care centers. Health care center staff may have information about emergency care for animals.

How much does it cost to go to a health care center?

There is no charge for treatment at the health care centers for illness or injuries related to the emergency. Your insurance will not be billed.