When to use Urgent Care

If you need care and your doctor’s office is closed, you can go to an urgent care center. Most urgent care centers are open in the evenings and on weekends and holidays.

You should use urgent care for a condition that needs care right away, but that is not life-threatening. You can go to urgent care instead of the emergency room for things like a cut, sprain, eye injury, sore throat, cold, flu, fever or insect bite.

Going to urgent care is easy because you can just walk in. You do not need an appointment. There is usually only a short wait and you do not have to pay to be seen.

Many L.A. Care doctors have urgent care hours in the evenings, weekends and holidays. Talk to your doctor to learn more about urgent care services or to find a center near you.

You can also call the nurse advice line if you need help. The phone number for this service is on the back of your member ID card. The call is free. A nurse can help you decide if you or your child should go to the emergency room or to urgent care.

If you have symptoms such as severe pain, broken bones, extreme bleeding, seizures or if you’ve ingested poison, call 911 for help or go to the nearest emergency room. Do not stop to call the nurse advice line or your doctor. You do not need prior approval or a referral to go to the emergency room.

You can get sick or injured at any time. Please remember these steps when you get sick or injured:

1. If you feel you just need some advice, call the nurse advice line. The number is on the back of your member ID card.
2. After hours, call your doctor’s office. Ask to talk to your doctor or a doctor on call. If a doctor is not available, the operator will have another doctor call you back.
3. When you call after hours, ask the doctor you speak with if there is an urgent care center you can go to for your condition.
4. Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room if you think your condition is serious.
Flu
The flu is caused by a virus. Flu symptoms come on quickly and include body aches, fever, feeling very tired or weak, and sometimes a dry cough. These symptoms can last up to two weeks. The flu can sometimes lead to more serious health problems.

Cold
Colds are usually milder than the flu. Symptoms include a stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, coughing and a scratchy throat. Colds last for about a week. In some cases, a cold can lead to an ear or sinus infection.

Treatment
If you think you have the flu, get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. Because the flu is caused by a virus, antibiotics will not help. You can take some over-the-counter medications to help you feel better. Never give aspirin to children or teenagers without first talking to your doctor. See your doctor as soon as you can if your fever lasts more than 3–4 days or if symptoms get worse. High-risk individuals such as children under 5 years of age, pregnant women, adults over 65, people with chronic conditions, and those on long-term aspirin therapy. Those living in nursing homes or other long-term care facilities should call their doctor or nurse advice line within 48 hours of symptoms.

Treatment
As with the flu, the best way to treat a cold is with lots of fluids and rest. Cough drops and over-the-counter sore throat sprays can help you feel better. Other over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) and ibuprofen (Motrin) can help lower fevers and reduce aches. You can take a decongestant to ease a stuffy nose, but these are kept with the pharmacist behind the counter. Visit your doctor if your fever doesn’t go away after a few days or if cold symptoms last longer than two weeks or do not get better.

Ways to Protect Yourself
The best way to keep from getting the flu is to get a flu shot every year. You can get the shot at your doctor’s office. You may still get the flu even if you had a flu shot, but chances are you will get better quicker. Your doctor can also give you medicine that will help prevent the flu if you take it for at least two weeks during a flu outbreak.

While there isn’t a vaccine for the cold, here are a few things you can do to keep yourself from getting a cold or passing it on to others:

- Wash your hands often, especially after you sneeze, cough or blow your nose.
- Keep your hands away from your face.
- Cover your nose or mouth when you sneeze and cough.
- Get lots of rest to help keep your immune system strong.
- Maintain a healthy diet.
As a member of L.A. Care, you have the right to…

Respectful and courteous treatment. You have the right to be treated with respect, dignity and courtesy from your health plan’s providers and staff. You have the right to be free from retaliation or force of any kind when making decisions about your care.

Privacy and confidentiality. You have the right to have a private relationship with your provider and to have your medical record kept confidential. You also have the right to receive a copy of, amend, and request corrections to your medical record. If you are a minor, you have the right to certain services that do not need your parent’s okay.

Choice and involvement in your care. You have the right to receive information about your health plan, its services, its doctors and other providers. You have the right to choose your Primary Care Physician (doctor) from the doctors and clinics listed in your health plan’s provider directory. You also have the right to get appointments within a reasonable amount of time. You have the right to talk with your doctor about any care your doctor provides or recommends, discuss all treatment options, and participate in making decisions about your care. You have the right to a second opinion. You have the right to talk candidly to your doctor about appropriate or medically necessary treatment options for your condition, regardless of the cost or what your benefits are. You have a right to information about treatment regardless of the cost or what your benefits are. You have the right to say “no” to treatment. You have the right to decide in advance how you want to be cared for in case you have a life-threatening illness or injury.

Voice your concerns. You have the right to complain about L.A. Care, the health plans and providers we work with, or the care you get without fear of losing your benefits. L.A. Care will help you with the process. If you don’t agree with a decision, you have the right to appeal, which is to ask for a review of the decision. You have the right to disenroll from your health plan whenever you want. As a Medi-Cal member, you have the right to request a State Fair Hearing.

Service outside of your health plan’s provider network. You have the right to receive emergency or urgent services as well as family planning and sexually transmitted disease services outside of your health plan’s network. You have the right to receive emergency treatment whenever and wherever you need it.

Service and information in your language. You have the right to request an interpreter at no charge and not use a family member or a friend to translate for you. You have the right to get the Member Handbook and other information in another language or format.

Know your rights. You have the right to receive information about your rights and responsibilities. You have the right to make recommendations about these rights and responsibilities.

As a member of L.A. Care, you have the responsibility to…

Act courteously and respectfully. You are responsible for treating your doctor and all providers and staff with courtesy and respect. You are responsible for being on time for your visits or calling your doctor’s office at least 24 hours before the visit to cancel or reschedule.

Give up-to-date, accurate and complete information. You are responsible for giving correct information and as much information as you can to all of your providers and L.A. Care. You are responsible for getting regular check-ups and telling your doctor about health problems before they become serious.

Follow your doctor’s advice and take part in your care. You are responsible for talking over your health care needs with your doctor, developing and agreeing on goals, doing your best to understand your health problems, and following the treatment plans and instructions you both agree on.

Use the Emergency Room only in an emergency. You are responsible for using the emergency room in cases of an emergency or as directed by your doctor.

Report wrongdoing. You are responsible for reporting health care fraud or wrongdoing to L.A. Care. You can do this without giving your name by calling the L.A. Care Fraud and Abuse Hotline toll-free at 1-800-400-4889.
If you are a woman, you are at risk for cervical and breast cancer.  

True. Every woman is at risk for cervical and breast cancer. The good news is cancer is easier to treat if you find it early. The sad news is many women do not get screenings like Pap tests and mammograms. African-American women are the least likely to get these tests.

You only need a Pap test if you are sexually active.  

False. If you are a woman, you should have a Pap test when you turn 21 or within three years of becoming sexually active (which ever comes first). The test should be done every one to three years after that.

A lot of women fear Pap tests or mammograms.  

True. Members we talked to said they did not want to have these tests because they were afraid the tests would hurt. They also said they were afraid of being told they had cancer. However, it’s important to get these tests so your doctor can catch any problems early on. Talk to your doctor about your concerns.

There is no better day than today to ask your doctor if you need a Pap test or mammogram.  

True. Ask a girlfriend or female family member to go with you for support. You’ll both benefit!

October is Women’s Health Month!  

Stop by one of L.A. Care’s Family Resource Centers this month to attend one of our cervical and breast cancer education classes and nutrition classes.

Lynwood Family Resource Center  
Nutrition Education Class—every Saturday of the month from 10:30 am–11:30 am

Inglewood Family Resource Center  
Breast & Cervical Health Education Class—every 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month from 10 am–noon
Control Your Diabetes!
Don’t Let It Control You!
Controlling your diabetes isn’t easy, but it can be done.
And you can do it!

Know Your ABC’s
A is for A1C — Tells you your blood sugar over the last 3 months.
   Goal: less than 7.
B is for blood pressure — Tells you how hard your heart is pumping.
   Goal: below 130/80.
C is for cholesterol — Tells you your LDL (bad cholesterol) level.
   Goal: LDL cholesterol below 100.

Know What Tests or Procedures Need To Be Done
D is for dental exam — Checks for problems with your mouth, teeth and gums.
   Do this every year.
E is for eye exam — Checks for eye problems. Do this every year.
F is for foot exam — Checks for problems with your feet. Do this every year.
I is for influenza (the flu) shot — Get a flu shot every year.
K is for kidneys — A urine test to check for kidney problems. Do this every year.

Stay HEALTHY and Take Control of Your Diabetes
Healthy eating — Choose fruits, vegetables, fish, lean meat, whole grains, low
fat or fat free milk and cheese.
Examine feet daily for cuts, blisters, red spots, and swelling.
Avoid smoking — Call 1-800-NO-BUTTS for help or talk to your doctor.
Learn to handle stress — Ask for help if you are having trouble dealing
with pressure.
Take your medications as instructed even when you feel good.
Have fun — Start walking! Always check with your doctor before starting
an exercise plan.
You can take control — Start now!

Learn About Your Benefits
As a new or existing member to L.A. Care Health Plan, you might
be confused about your benefits. Do you know what a co-payment is
or why you need to pick a primary
care physician (PCP) for your health-
care needs? Perhaps you are not sure
of your rights or what services and
benefits you receive under your plan.
L.A. Care is here to help you. You
can read about your benefits in your
Member Handbook or visit our Web
site at www.lacare.org to learn about
what is offered to you as an L.A. Care
member.

Or come to a new member class at
one of the Family Resource Centers!
New member classes are free and you
will get a $10 Target gift card for
coming! We also offer free childcare
while you attend the class. Classes
are offered once a month. Call for
details.

Lynwood Family Resource Center
3180 E. Imperial Highway
Lynwood, CA 90262
1-888-525-9693

Inglewood Family Resource Center
3111 W. Century Blvd.
Inglewood, CA 90303
1-888-213-9374
Tips to Stop Smoking

Use these five steps to help you stop smoking.

1. Get ready.
   - Set a quit date within two weeks.
   - Recall what worked and what did not work when you tried to quit in the past.

2. Get help.
   - Tell family and friends that you are going to stop and that you want their help. Ask them not to smoke around you.
   - Ask your doctor about the California Smokers’ Helpline (1-800-NO-BUTTS or 1-800-662-8887). This helpline is FREE to anyone in California who wants to stop smoking.

3. Learn new ways to live without cigarettes.
   - Do something else when you feel like smoking.

4. Get stop-smoking medication and use it the right way.
   - Medication can double your chances of stopping for good. Talk to your doctor. Read and follow the directions on the package. Medi-Cal covers stop-smoking products like the patch and the gum.

5. Don’t get discouraged.
   - Don’t feel bad if you start smoking again. Most people try to quit more than once before they stop for good.

Important News about Cough and Cold Medicines

The Food and Drug Administration advises not to give over-the-counter cough and cold medicine to children under 4 years of age. Cough and cold medicines can be harmful if used in the wrong way.

Most doctors agree that you can help your children feel better without using cough and cold medicines. Here are some tips to keep your kids safe from the dangers of medicine:

- Store medications where children can’t reach them.
- Avoid taking medicine in front of your children.
- Never refer to medicine as “candy.”

Clean out your medicine cabinet from time to time and get rid of medications you don’t need.

Cut down your trips to the pharmacy!

L.A. Care eligible members can now receive a 90-day supply of select medications at certain local pharmacies or through an easy-to-use mail order service. These are medications that are taken every day to help with conditions such as asthma, diabetes and high blood pressure. Make sure that your doctor writes the prescription for a 90-day supply.

L.A. Care partners with pharmacies throughout Los Angeles County to offer this service.

QUESTIONS?

Call L.A. Care’s Member Services at 1-888-839-9909 to find out how you can use the mail order service for your medications, or to find a pharmacy near you.
These benefits will NOT change for Medi-Cal members who are:

- Under the age of 21.
- Living in a skilled nursing facility level A or B. This includes subacute care facilities.
- Pregnant. If you are pregnant, you can continue to receive pregnancy-related benefits and services. You can also receive other benefits and services listed below to treat conditions that, if left untreated, might cause difficulties during the pregnancy. These services include dental exams, cleanings and gum treatment. Dental and other benefits and services may also be available up to 60 days after the baby is born.
- Receiving benefits through the California Children’s Services program (CCS).

The state is cutting a few benefits from the Medi-Cal program. These changes started on July 1, 2009 and only affect some adults 21 and over who are on Medi-Cal.

These changes do not affect members under 21 years of age. Medi-Cal benefits for members under 21 remain the same.

L.A. Care feels that five of the benefits the state cut are important to our members. As a result, L.A. Care will still provide these services when there is a medical need.

As an L.A. Care Medi-Cal member, you will continue to get:

- Speech therapy services
- Podiatric services
- Audiology services
- Incontinence creams and washes
- Annual optometry exams for diabetic members

If you have questions or if you are not sure if your benefits will change, please call Member Services at 1-888-839-9909.

Remember to always keep your ID card with you.

Show your ID card whenever you:

- Have a doctor’s visit
- Go to the hospital
- Need emergency services
- Pick up a prescription

If you lose or damage your ID card, call L.A. Care at 1-888-839-9909. Do not let anyone use your ID card. That is considered fraud.

Tips for a Healthy Smile

- Have a dental check-up and teeth cleaning once a year.
- Brush your teeth twice a day.
- Limit sugary candies and drinks and have more fruits, vegetables and water.

Have you moved?

If you have moved, call L.A. Care’s Member Services at 1-888-839-9909 to update your new address or phone number. This helps us make sure you get your health care coverage information and updates.
member news

Health or wellness or prevention information

For a Healthy Life

www.lacare.org

L.A. Care HEALTH PLAN

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