

Emergency Room & Urgent Care Center Policy



Commonwealth Pediatrics
Boston Children's
Primary Care Alliance

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We understand that sometimes it's difficult to figure out where your child should receive care when they're sick. We are here to help with that. Our on-call nurses and doctors are happy to speak with you, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As our office is open every day (including holidays!), we often can book an appointment for you to be seen promptly in our office that very day. We accommodate urgent, same day visits from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, Saturdays and holidays from 9 a.m. – 11 a.m., as well as Sundays from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Please always call us first so we can see you at Commonwealth Pediatrics, provide time- and money-saving home care advice, or direct you to a local emergency room or urgent care center if truly needed.

To help guide you, here are some examples of things we handle routinely in our office:

Asthma, coughs, colds, sore throats, minor cuts and scrapes, diarrhea, earaches, fevers in all patients over 2 months old, headaches, hives, minor burns, mild or moderate stomach pain, head injuries, concussions, pinkeye, removal of ticks & splinters, skin abscesses, sports injuries, strains and sprains, urinary tract infections, vomiting.

Here are some examples of things that should be handled in the emergency room:

Severe allergic reactions, fevers in patients under the age of 2 months, bleeding you can't stop, blue or purple skin or lips, choking, large burns or cuts, knocked-out teeth, near drowning, poisoning, seizures, severe stomach pain, severe difficulty breathing, steadily decreasing responsiveness, loss of consciousness, testicular pain or injury, and sudden impact injuries (like a fall from a height or a motor vehicle accident).

We typically do not recommend urgent care facilities, as we generally offer the same services these facilities do, and we have the added benefit of knowing your child and their medical history. That's why we appreciate a phone call before you visit an urgent care or emergency room; we will make every effort to have your child seen in our office promptly, provide home care advice when appropriate, or direct you to an urgent care skilled in caring for children.

If we feel the medical situation requires more than we can offer, we are happy to refer. Otherwise, it is our belief that our knowledge of your child makes us best suited to provide high quality care for them and for your family.

For these reasons, Commonwealth Pediatrics will not honor a request for a back-dated referral to an Emergency Room or Urgent Care Center for anything other than an acute life-threatening emergency.