

Appropriate use of the emergency room



A health emergency occurs when a person needs immediate medical attention to avoid putting their life or physical integrity at risk. It can also be a mental health emergency when their behavior poses a danger to themselves or others.

When should we go to the emergency room?

Emergency rooms are designed to treat serious or life-threatening situations. They are not the primary place to treat routine medical conditions, but we should go immediately when certain warning signs appear.

Some warning signs are:

- Difficulty breathing.
- Pain or pressure in the chest or upper abdomen.
- Fainting, dizziness, or weakness.
- Sudden changes in vision.
- Confusion, delirium, or changes in mental status.
- An accident or fall if you have hit your head.
- Uncontrollable bleeding.
- Diarrhea or vomiting that won't stop.
- Vomiting blood.
- Suicidal thoughts (“wanting to die”) or homicidal thoughts (thinking about seriously harming someone).
- Problems speaking or moving your arms or legs.

What should we take to an emergency room?

In Puerto Rico, Law No. 62 of May 15, 2008, establishes that no emergency room may refuse to treat a patient with an emergency or a woman in labor, under any circumstances.

However, it is recommended that patients bring the following with them:

- Health insurance card.
- A list of the medications they are currently taking.
- A list of medications to which they are allergic.

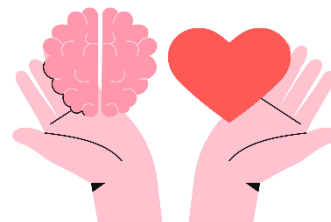
What should I do before and after leaving the emergency room?

Before leaving, make sure you understand the care you need to continue at home.

If the treatment plan includes medications, ask which ones you should take, how, and for how long.

In addition, it is important to schedule a visit with your primary care physician after the emergency to follow up on your condition, adjust treatments, and prevent future complications.

If you have any health conditions, whether physical or mental, it is important to keep them under control to avoid an emergency.



Some recommendations for staying healthy are:

Stay physically active: Exercise thirty (30) minutes a day. Consult your primary care physician before starting.



Eat a healthy diet: Try to eat foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, salt, and added sugars.

Maintain a healthy weight: Try to balance the calories you consume with those you burn through physical activity.

Do not drink alcohol, or drink in moderation: If you decide to drink alcohol, limit your consumption. Some people should not drink alcohol.

Do not smoke: If you smoke, ask your doctor about treatment options to help you quit.

Get preventive screenings: They help detect health conditions before symptoms appear, allowing for early treatment and better outcomes.



Take your medications as directed by your doctor. If you have any questions,

consult your doctor immediately.

Medical appointments: Keep a calendar of your appointments. This will help you remember when your next appointment is. Bring a list of any questions you may have.

Vaccination: Remember that there are vaccines that are administered annually. Don't forget to consult your doctor about the vaccines you need to complete.

Stress management: If you ever feel nervous, unable to concentrate, or tired, first try to relax or engage in a hobby you enjoy. If you continue to feel this way, ask your doctor about the best alternative for managing stress.

Social and Emotional Aspects

For recommendations, tools, and resources on how you and your family can cope with the emotional and physical concerns that arise during and after your treatment, please visit your primary care physician or call the following hotlines:

Medical Advice Line

1-844-347-7801

TTY/TDD 1-844-347-7804

APS Health 787-641-9133

References:

- <https://pns-pr.com/como-orientar-a-tus-pacientes-sobre-el-uso-adecuado-de-salas-de-urgencia-y-emergencia/?lang=es>
- <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000593.htm>
- <https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002393.htm>
- <https://bvirtualogp.pr.gov/ogp/Bvirtual/leyesreferencia/PDF/2/0062-2008.pdf>

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