

Learning how to navigate the US Medical System



By the end of this chapter you should be able to ...

- Explain the difference between urgent care, primary care doctor, specialty doctor, ER and pharmacy
- Be able to find a doctor that takes your insurance near you
- Be able to identify different situations to use urgent care or the ER
- Know how to schedule an appointment with your doctor

The overview: Let's discuss

How was getting a prescription like in your country?

How would you find a doctor you liked ?

Definitions of each

- Emergency Room/ ER- Urgent medical emergency there is a wait time at the hospital depending on the issue. Can call 911 if issue is urgent
- Primary care Doctor- consistent care (Doctor the whole family can see)
- Pharmacy- where you pick up your medication
- Speciality Doctor- specific problem (primary doctor will refer you)
- Urgent care- immediate non medical emergency (minor issues like ear infection)

Urgent Care

Urgent Care-
immediate non medical emergency (minor issues like ear infection), be cautious of closing time

Some Symptoms For Urgent Care

- Fever without a rash
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Wheezing or shortness of breath
- Dehydration
- Moderate flu-like symptoms
- Sprains and strains
- Small cuts that may require stitches



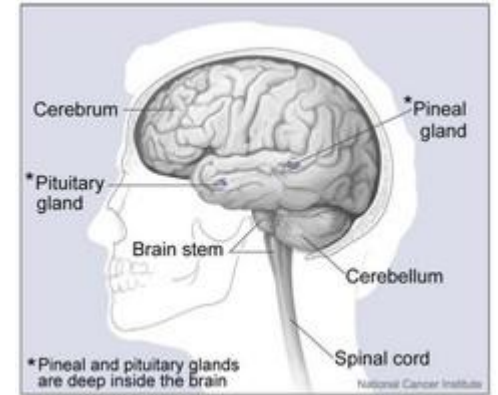
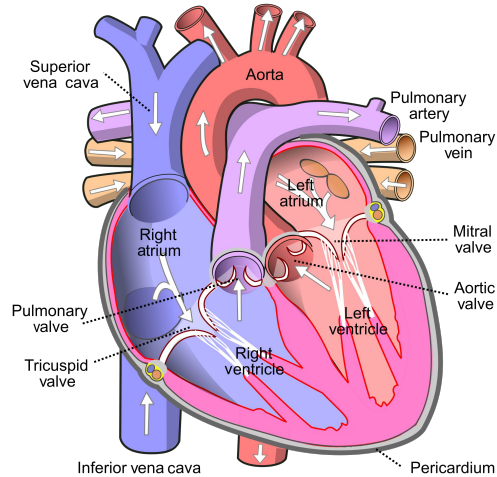
Primary Care Doctor

- A Primary Care Doctor is one that can offer consistent care (Doctor the whole family can see)
- Doctor for yearly checkups



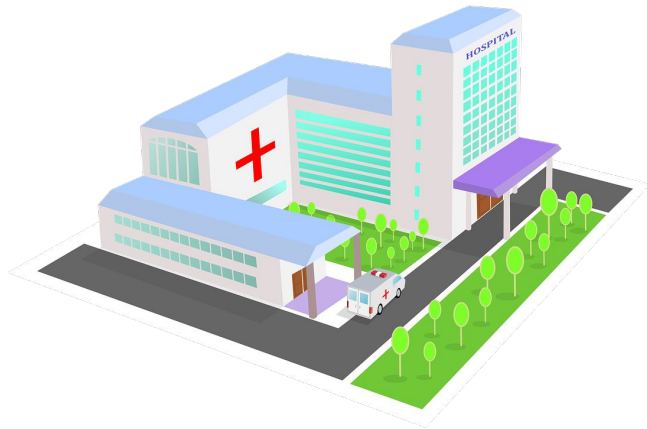
Speciality Care Doctor

- This is a doctor for a specific part of your body.
- Primary Care Doctor refers you



Emergency Room

- For immediate medical emergencies
- There can be a waiting time depending on how urgent the medical issue is
- If it is late at night and the urgent care is closed go to the ER



Pharmacy difference in US



- Must have prescription written by Doctor in order to pick up medication, sometimes insurance won't cover certain medications
- At the end of a visit doctor will ask for a pharmacy to send medication choose the one closest to your home

Different pharmacies include

1. CVS (can be found in local grocery store sometimes)
2. Walgreens
3. Rite aid



Scheduling an appointment with your doctor

1. Let them know if you're a new patient. You may have to wait a few weeks to get an appointment, especially if you're a new patient. If you call your provider's office because you're sick, you may be able to see them the same day.
2. Tell them the reason for your visit. You might be looking for a new primary care provider or you might need to come in because you have a specific concern, like the flu, allergies, or depression.
3. Give them the name of your health insurance plan. If you have Medicaid or CHIP coverage – let them know.
4. Find out if you need to bring anything to the visit, like medical records or current medications.
5. It's important to know the name of the provider you'd like to see. You may have to wait longer for an appointment if you request a specific provider, so they might recommend another provider in your network who has availability if you're feeling sick and need to come in sooner.

Making an appointment. HealthCare.gov. (n.d.). Retrieved May 16, 2022, from <https://www.healthcare.gov/blog/making-an-appointment/>

Exercises

Find a doctor that will take your insurance in your local area

<https://www.zocdoc.com>

If you have an ear infection and want immediate help who/where should you go to?

- a) Specialty doctor
- b) Urgent Care
- c) Emergency Room
- d) Primary Care Doctor

Reflection

What was the biggest difference you saw between pharmacies in the US vs your country?

How is scheduling an appointment different in your country?

Was there any urgent cares, or similar places in your country?