Choosing the right setting for your health care

You should go to your primary care doctor (PCP) for care whenever you can. Your PCP knows you the best and has quick access to your medical records.

However, there may be times when your PCP is not available or you may need to go to a facility other than your PCP's office. Here is a list of some examples of provider “types” and the services they generally provide.

- **PCP’s office:**
  Visit your PCP's office when you need routine care or treatment for a current health issue. Your PCP provides care to manage your general health, preventive and routine care, manages your prescriptions and refers you to specialists, if/when necessary. Also see your PCP for treatment of common infections (e.g. strep throat), ear aches, minor skin conditions (e.g. poison ivy), vaccinations, pregnancy tests, and minor injuries such as cuts, burns, bruises, sprains and strains.

- **Convenience Care Clinics:**
  These clinics are not available in every town/city across Texas so be sure to search for Convenience Care Clinic providers in your area or while traveling. The providers in these clinics can treat common infections, ear aches, minor skin conditions, minor injuries such as cuts, burns bruises, minor sprains and strains, and provide vaccinations and pregnancy tests.

- **Urgent Care Centers:**
  Urgent care centers offer treatment for urgent but non-life threatening injuries or illnesses and are available on a walk-in basis. Receive treatment for conditions such as sprains, strains, minor broken bones (e.g. finger), minor infections, small cuts that may require a few stitches, and minor burns. **NOTE: some freestanding facilities can be easily confused as urgent care centers when they are freestanding emergency rooms. Visiting a freestanding ER can have higher out-of-pocket costs.**

- **Hospital Emergency Room (ER/Hospital Freestanding ER)**
  The Emergency Room is for the treatment of life-threatening or very serious conditions that require immediate medical attention such as heavy bleeding, large open wounds, sudden change in vision, chest pain, sudden weakness or trouble talking, major burns, spinal injuries, severe head injury, difficulty breathing and major broken bones. **IMPORTANT – Do not ignore a health emergency. If a situation seems life threatening, take action. Call 911 or your local emergency number right away.** Many hospitals and other organizations are opening new “freestanding ER” locations in your community. These freestanding ER’s may appear to be an urgent care center or convenience clinic, but they are actually still part of the hospital ER. If you receive care at one of these freestanding ER’s, you may be charged the hospital ER rates for any and all of your services.

Remember, you have nurses available to you 24/7. If it’s not an emergency, call UHC’s registered nurses to help answer your health questions by calling 1-866-336-9371 and say “Speak to a nurse”.

Remember, you can look up providers on [www.healthselectoftexas.com](http://www.healthselectoftexas.com) or [www.myuhc.com/hs](http://www.myuhc.com/hs).