

What to know before you go

Four ways to maximize your Urgent Care options



The opening of the St. Vincent's Urgent Care center just off U.S. Highway 280 provides new options for area residents to receive non-emergency, walk-in care from a major health system. Conceived as an after-hours center, this new addition to the St. Vincent's One Nineteen campus is open 1 to 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

Although Urgent Care has become a familiar concept to most area residents, health professionals aren't always sure every consumer understands how to best use such facilities. Those involved in the planning of the new St. Vincent's Urgent Care are therefore offering the following four suggestions for maximizing its usage:

1. Choose the right place.

If you suspect a threat to life or limb — including difficulty breathing, seizure, possible stroke, heart attack or traumatic injury — your destination should be an emergency room. In fact, St. Vincent's emergency room doctors say such situations warrant a 911 call. They also advise anyone who believes they might have an emergency to head to the nearest hospital.

However, medical professionals also understand that choosing the right place can be tricky. That's why St. Vincent's Urgent Care staff is attuned to evolving emergencies. If staff members suspect a patient's radiating back pain might indicate a heart attack rather than what he or she assumed was a sprain or strain, physicians will ensure the patient is transported to a properly-equipped and notified emergency department.

Some patients hedge their bets, heading to emergency rooms for sore throats and other after-hours visits. But doctors say that's not a good idea. Since emergency care is highly specialized, those patients will usually pay more and wait longer for emergency room treatment than they would have in urgent care facilities. Savvy consumers therefore choose the right place for their care.

2. Choose the right care.

St. Vincent's Urgent Care has been designed to address after-hours the sorts of concerns primary care doctors' offices accommodate. Those might include respiratory-related infections, tummy troubles, minor injuries or work-related medical forms. Although doctors' offices are ideal for such care, they aren't always open. And by the time a patient recognizes their need and makes a call, the office may be booked for the afternoon.

When baseball practice ends at 6 p.m. and a teen limps off the field with a badly swollen ankle, St. Vincent's Urgent Care is available. Urgent Care is also available when a diabetic becomes concerned about their blood sugar on Saturday afternoon, or an asthma flare worsens on Sunday morning.

Urgent Care is an excellent destination when mishaps require a stitch, sling or patch. And while St. Vincent's Urgent Care is designed to address immediate concerns, it will also provide access to the entire St. Vincent's physicians' network, connecting patients with chronic conditions to primary or specialty care physicians who can help manage those concerns.

Since Urgent Care is all about meeting immediate needs, you should expect to be referred for follow-up with your primary care physician or specialist if needed. That means you might receive a short-term prescription from an Urgent Care Center doctor, but not refills. Urgent Care is not intended to be your final destination for ongoing concerns that require long-term management.

3. Choose to be prepared.

Prepared patients don't necessarily expect to need an urgent care facility, but they know what to do if a need arises. Just as you already carry your insurance card with you, if you ask ahead about what your health insurance plan provides you won't be surprised by what is covered, or not covered, in an after-hours visit.



Insiders say preparation also speeds the intake process. Savvy parents and family caregivers maintain grab-and-go medical information on their loved ones, so they can quickly complete allergies, medications and medical history paperwork. Such prep not only shortens waits, say St. Vincent’s Urgent Care planners, but also offers more accurate information for physicians.

4. Choose to be informed.

As walk-in medical offices open on virtually every street corner, health care specialists across the nation are encouraging consumers to make informed choices.

They say you should know that not every immediate care facility is the same. St. Vincent’s Urgent Care is an extension of St. Vincent’s Health System. In view of that longstanding reputation, this facility not only includes certified laboratories and diagnostics capabilities, ranging from x-rays to EKG, but is also accredited by the Urgent Care Association of America, the industry’s trade association that evaluates scope of practice, patient safety and quality of care.

St. Vincent’s Urgent Care Center has been planned for when fevers spike, dogs bite or something doesn’t feel quite right. As one part of St. Vincent’s Health System’s continuum of care, planners say extraordinary measures have been taken to ensure area residents are provided with an exemplary option for immediate, walk-in care from a long-trusted health system equipped to address patient’s long-term needs.



St. Vincent's
URGENT CARE

(Now Open)

7191 Cahaba Valley Road, Suite 108
Birmingham, AL 35242 • (205) 408-2366

Mon.–Fri. 1–9 p.m. • Sat. and Sun. 9 a.m.–6 p.m.

Accredited and certified by the
Urgent Care Association of America.

An urgent care situation requires prompt medical attention, but is not considered an emergency or life-threatening situation. Examples of urgent care situations we treat include:

- Ear or eye infections
- Fever
- Cuts that may need stitches
- Possible broken bones or simple fractures
- Severe sore throat
- Sprains and strains
- Allergies
- Skin infections
- Upper respiratory tract infections
- Urinary tract infections
- Minor burns
- Animal and insect bites

stvurgentcare.com

