



MedStar Health

# Welcome to the Emergency Department

at MedStar Washington Hospital Center

Thank you for waiting. Below are the initial steps to help you during your visit and some important information to guide you through your stay with us. Click on one of the options to bring you to that section of this document

## Initial Steps

1. Please check in at the front desk when you arrive. Have your ID (Driver's License or Passport) ready.
2. You will be asked to sit in the ED waiting area. Unlike a local walk-in clinic, the Emergency Department (ED) is not a first-come, first-served department. Our priority in the ED is to save lives. We try to see everyone as quickly as possible, and we prioritize the sickest patients based on their vital signs, medical history, and test results. You may see individuals who have arrived to the ED after you, and they may be called before you. Thank you for your patience and understanding.
3. An ED triage nurse will call you when it is your turn. The nurse will do the following:
  - a. Ask you to share the reason for your visit to the ED
  - b. Ask about your medical history
  - c. Check your vital signs (temperature, heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate, and oxygen saturation)
4. The ED triage nurse may also share your health information with an ED clinician. This clinician will talk to you by video chat and start your care by ordering initial tests and medications you may need. This is just the initial evaluation; you will still see a provider in person to complete your treatment.
5. After this stage is complete, we will order medications or tests while you are waiting. Please refer to the posted "Next Steps" board for approximate times for the completion of tests. However, you will still need to wait to see a provider for the results and to determine the next steps of your care from here.

**Please do not leave the treatment area.** Your name will be called when our care team is available to see you. If you feel that you require immediate attention while you are waiting, please see any team member.

The information you give the ED triage nurse will be used to assign you to the most appropriate area of the ED. You may have a life-threatening emergency that requires immediate critical care. You may also have a situation that may be treated more quickly in our FastER Care area.

## General Information

### Visitor Policy

MedStar Washington Visitor Policy: One visitor at a time is allowed in the main Emergency Department, and no visitors are allowed in FastER Care or the inner waiting area. No visitors under the age of 12 are allowed. Exceptions are made for patients with special needs. These policies are for everyone's safety.

Please note, our Visitor Policy may change due to safety concerns (as they did during the Covid-19 pandemic.) To see our current visitor policy, click here on our website <https://www.medstarhealth.org/locations/medstar-washington-hospital-center/patient-and-visitor-information#visitorInfo>

### Parking

We offer discounted parking for patients who are discharged from the Emergency Department. The Main Hospital garage is the closest to the Emergency Department. Please show the "Parking Validation" section of your discharge paperwork to the Parking Service Associate when leaving the garage to receive your discount.

### Can I take photos or videos?

No. It is forbidden to take photos, videos, or recordings of staff or other patients without their expressed consent.

### Patient and Visitor Code of Conduct

Please see our Patient and Visitor Code of Conduct. <https://www.medstarhealth.org/code-of-conduct>

### COVID-19/Coronavirus

We strive to keep you safe. Learn more here. <https://www.medstarhealth.org/mhs/about-medstar/covid-19-info/>

### Smoking

MedStar Washington Hospital Center is a non-smoking facility. For information about how to quit smoking, click here: [https://www.medstarhealth.org/-/media/project/mho/medstar/pdf/smoking-cessation-resources-flyer\\_2022\\_11\\_d5.pdf](https://www.medstarhealth.org/-/media/project/mho/medstar/pdf/smoking-cessation-resources-flyer_2022_11_d5.pdf)

### Wi-Fi

For Wi-Fi, please connect to the "MedStar Guest Network." A web browser will open asking the user to sign the acceptable use policy. Upon signing, the user will be able to browse the internet.

### Phone charging

Charging stations and USB ports are available in the ED waiting area.

### Language translation

Interpreter services are available anytime. Please ask a staff member for assistance.

### Spiritual Care

Chaplains can visit the ED to provide spiritual and emotional support to patients and visitors. If you would like a visit, please ask a staff member to call a chaplain for you. There is also a chapel on the first floor of the hospital.

### Food options

If your medical team says it's safe for you to eat, you may want to try the cafeteria on the ground floor or Panera Bread® in the Physician's Office Building. <https://locations.panerabread.com/dc/washington/106-irving-st-nw.html>

### When can I eat?

Please check with your care team before eating, because you may need an empty stomach for certain tests or procedures. Certain complaints, such as abdominal pain or chest pain, may require you to wait. Please ask before you eat or drink anything.

### Compliments or concerns

Say Thank You! Take a minute to make the day of someone who has cared for you. Text MWHC to 616.44. WAMBI (616.449.2624). Wambi gives you a quick way to thank the people who impacted your care.

You may also call the Customer Care Line at 202-877-4YOU for any compliments or concerns.

### Medical students

Did you know the Emergency Department at MedStar Washington Hospital Center is a primary training site for student doctors from Georgetown University Medical School? These students are always supervised by ED doctors (attendings).

### Observation and inpatient status:

You are admitted to the hospital when you need to stay for additional testing or treatment beyond an Emergency Department visit. You may be admitted under OBSERVATION or INPATIENT status. This is a regulatory distinction, but the quality of care is the same.

# Frequently Asked Questions

Click on the questions below to go directly to the answer:

**What should I bring with me?**

**Why am I waiting?**

**Will I be in a room?**

**Who are the various members of our healthcare team?**

**What is the Gold Team?**

**What is FastER Care?**

**What happens if I am admitted to the hospital?**

**Why am I being transferred?**

**What happens if I am discharged?**

## What should I bring with me?

Have your:

- ID (Driver's license or Passport)
- Insurance card
- Medications or medication list
- List of your medical problems
- Name and phone number of your primary care doctor if you have one

## Why am I waiting?

Our goal is to make sure that every patient receives quality, safe care. Sometimes our Emergency Department is very busy and wait times are longer than expected. This is especially true when we have a high number of seriously ill patients. Please know that when we are experiencing challenging wait times, we are here for you, and we will see everyone regardless of how long it takes.

<https://vimeo.com/380803902>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mygmoUzjrB4>

## Will I be in a room?

You may be evaluated in a chair, hallway stretcher, or in a room. Patients who need to undress for evaluation are temporarily taken to rooms for privacy. Most patients who are transferred to rooms are those who must have a heart monitor, have an infectious illness that must be contained, or may be a danger to others. We focus on seeing each person, and we transfer as many patients into rooms as we can, and as space allows. <https://vimeo.com/474797064/9df10bbd63>

## Who are the various members of our healthcare team?

Want to know more about our ED staff and our roles?

Continue reading below or check out our staff video [here](#).

## Who are we?

You can identify Emergency Department clinical staff by our badges and scrub colors.



<b>Light Blue</b>	<b>Navy Blue</b>	<b>Green/</b>	<b>Gray</b>
Nurses	Doctors	<b>Royal Blue</b>	Nursing
	Physician	Techs	Leaders
	Assistants		

## Service Associate

The Service Associate will be the first ED team member you meet. They will help you check in to the ED.

## ED Triage Nurse

The ED Triage (assessment) Nurse will take your vital signs. They help make sure each patient is seen in the ED location that best suits their needs and care.

## ED Triage Clinician

The ED Triage Clinician may meet you by a telemedicine connection (video chat). They will begin your ED care by ordering tests and medicines you may need while you wait to see an in-person clinician, to help expedite your care.

## ED Team Nurse

The ED Team Nurse monitors you throughout your ED stay. They will ensure you get the medication and tests your clinician has ordered for you. This nurse will make sure you are safe and answer any questions you may have about your care.

## ED Techs/PCTs

Techs assist doctors and nurses. They will monitor your vital signs, draw blood, obtain EKGs (electrocardiogram), and help care for you.

## These team members make vital decisions about your care:

- **ED Doctor (attending)** will lead your care team and is responsible for your medical care.
- **ED Doctor (resident)** is a doctor who cares for you while working under the supervision of an attending doctor.
- **ED Physician Assistant (PAs)** works throughout the ED and particularly in FastER Care. They have specialized skills to diagnose and treat many emergencies. Depending on your symptoms and condition, the ED Physician Assistant may be your main source of care.
- **Physician Consults:** There may be a time when the ED doctor will consult with a specialty physician who will help make decisions regarding your care.

## Other important team members:

- **Respiratory Therapists** work with you if you need help breathing.
- **Environmental Services associates** help keep the ED clean.
- **CFC (Central Financial Clearance)** associates collect demographic/insurance information and emergency contact details.
- **Protective Services** associates keep everyone in the ED safe.

## What is the Gold Team?

Gold team is the color of the intake team that starts your tests, while you wait for your assigned nurse, physician assistant, or doctor.

## What is FastER Care?

FastER Care: This area serves patients who are less likely to have a life-threatening condition. It is staffed primarily by skilled ED Physician Assistants who work closely with our team of attending doctors.

## What happens if I am admitted to the hospital?

If admitted, a hospital care team will take charge of your care. You will have new doctors assigned to your care; however, you will remain in the Emergency Department until a hospital bed is available. This process may take a long time when all hospital beds are occupied. While you wait in the Emergency Department for a room assignment, you will continue to receive quality, safe care.

## Why am I being transferred?

Depending on your condition, we may admit you, but we don't always have enough room for all patients who come to our ED. In this case, we may transfer you to another MedStar Health hospital. We make all the arrangements and transfer you from here. Your doctor and nurse here will speak to the team taking care of you at the other hospital; and your new care team will have the same medical records as your original team. We can update your family to make sure they know where you are and how best to reach you. We will ensure you have transport to get home after you are well enough to be discharged. <https://vimeo.com/474799418/cc810b750>

## What happens if I am discharged?

If discharged, you will leave with a care plan that includes treatment, follow-up, and prescription and return instructions. This is the time to ask and get answers to your final questions, and when your nurse will give you your final discharge instructions. Make sure you know/are told the answers to the following questions:

- Do I understand the instructions (for medicine schedules, follow-ups, etc....)?
- Next steps/follow up plans?
- Monitoring for certain signs/symptoms?
- Prescriptions?

## After your Emergency Department Visit

### What should I do after leaving the Emergency Department?

We want you to continue to get the care you need after you leave the hospital. We will review your discharge instructions with you, which will include who you need to see later for follow-up care, what medications (if any) to take, and reasons to return.

### Where can I fill my prescriptions?

Most prescriptions can be sent electronically to your preferred pharmacy. The hospital pharmacy is in the Physician's Office Building and is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. For more information, click here. <https://www.medstarhealth.org/locations/pharmacy-medstar-washington-hospital-center>

### Patient Portal (Your medical information)

Access your Patient Portal here: <https://www.medstarhealth.org/mhs/about-medstar/mymedstar-patient-portal/>

With **myMedStar** you can:

- 1) View and manage appointments
- 2) See test results
- 3) Communicate with your doctor
- 4) Renew prescriptions
- 5) Access your health records
- 6) And much more

### Billing questions:

Questions about your bill? Learn more about our Financial Assistance Policy or contact Financial Services. <https://www.medstarhealth.org/financial-assistance-policy>

## Outpatient Care Options

### Doctor's Office, Urgent Care, or Emergency Department... where should I go?

There are times when it is hard to decide whether it is better to wait to be seen by your primary care doctor, visit your local Urgent Care, or go to the hospital's Emergency Department. Visits to the Emergency Department should be reserved for situations or conditions when life or limb is threatened, or when immediate attention is necessary. Urgent Care facilities are best for illnesses or injuries that are non-life threatening, and for times when it is not possible to be seen by a primary care doctor. To help promote better health outcomes, establishing a relationship with a primary care doctor is best.

Your primary care doctor can provide preventative care, prescription refills, referrals to specialists, and address other non-life-threatening concerns.

Per the above information, a video to help explain options can be found below. Please note: This video is not an endorsement from MedStar Health: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWNJweM1t84>

### MedStar Urgent Care Locations

Click here to learn more about selecting an Urgent Care location near you and booking an appointment. <https://www.medstarhealth.org/services/urgent-care>

### MedStar eVisits

Would you like help with non-urgent complaints from the comfort of your home? MedStar eVisits can help with specific problems. Learn more here. <https://www.medstarhealth.org/medstar-health-evisit/>



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