

Where do I go?

by Dr. Deepak Manmohan Goyal

Every patient who visits Jacobson Memorial Hospital Care Center and its affiliated clinics in Elgin and Glen Ullin receives the best possible patient care. Patients sometimes have questions, however, about where to go first:

Shall I go to the ER or wait until morning to be seen in the clinic?

What if I don't find an appointment with my provider?

What if I have something serious?

Your health is our priority. Still, it makes a lot of difference with the setting a patient is seen due to available resources medical personnel.

Depending on the severity of your illness or injury, you may be referred to the emergency room rather than be treated as a clinic patient. For example, a patient requiring an IV will not be treated in the clinic, but rather in the hospital's emergency room. On the other hand, an emergency must take priority over a walk-in clinic patient who does not have a life-threatening illness.

JMHCC and its clinics have adjusted scheduling to help make patient visits more efficient, and we offer the following information to help you make decisions about your care:

When should you choose ER?

No one else knows you and your body better than yourself! Follow your instinct. If you feel you need urgent attention, you are probably right! If there is any sudden onset of symptoms which you have been told to watch for or which are known to be concerning or which are unexplainable, it's always worth it to visit the ER, no matter what time of the day it is!

In the clinic, it is generally assumed the patient has a non-emergency issue. By presenting to the ER, we are saving that precious time which could make a difference in how soon and how much you will recover.

When should you choose the clinic?

Clinics are always best to handle your overall health and to help you stay healthy. If you feel you have medical issue(s) which are stable and you have concerns, non-serious issues or something which would not affect your life even if you had to wait few days, the clinic is the right place! Again, you know your body best!

The clinic lets you have time to discuss with your provider all your medical issues, refill medications, discuss side effects of medications, arrange referrals, arrange for your age-specific screenings, get vaccinations and address all the concerns you have. It helps your provider to provide you with holistic care.

The long-term effect of this is that it reduces your need to present to the ER as your health care needs are already aligned. Though unforeseen medical emergencies cannot be avoided, you can be in optimum medical health with the conditions you have.

I strongly recommend you make an appointment and let the scheduling personnel know about how much time you would need to discuss your health issue(s) so you can have ample time. We do schedule patients for at least 40 minutes for an annual physical exam to address all issues in detail.

I advise patients to make a list of the questions they need to ask before visiting provider, as it is common for patients to forget “something important.”

If you have not been feeling well, don’t wait until your illness becomes an emergency. Be proactive about your health!

When should you walk in?

Minor illnesses and injuries are unavoidable!

If you have a minor illness like a sore throat or urinary symptoms and you know you are generally healthy otherwise, walk-in might suit your needs. Since walk-in appointments are generally shorter in duration, your provider might not be able to talk about other medical and health issues like chronic health issues, screenings, vaccinations and medication refills if it is not the reason for the visit. Your provider may request you to schedule another visit to help us provide you with quality care without having to make our next patient wait.

Although we encourage every patient to schedule an appointment, we also welcome our walk-in patients.

Though we will try, you might not be able to see the provider of your choice as a walk-in patient. You may also have to wait for the next available opening. Providers will be only be able to discuss the urgent medical reason and you still might have to see your regular provider for other and chronic medical issue(s) if you have any.

We at JMHCC share the vision to treat patients as if they are family and we strive to provide you with quality service better than you would receive anywhere else with the resources we have. We reaffirm the commitment to you that we will continue doing so and we will continue to keep our patients at the center of our care and our purpose for being here.

We also welcome any ideas and suggestion from the community members and our patients for making our services better for you.