

# Emergency Department Patient Information Guide



1500 East Medical Center Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

(734) 936-6666



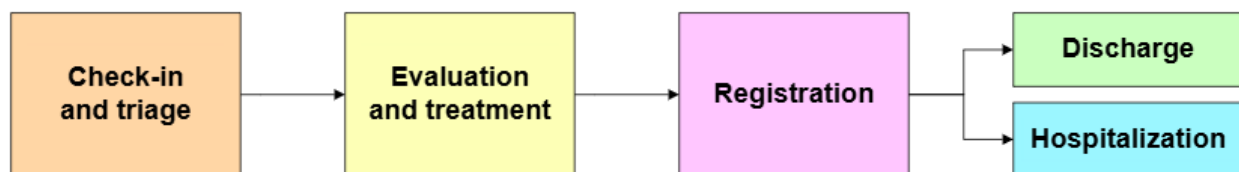
## Thank you for trusting us with your care.

Medical emergencies are stressful and often confusing. Our emergency department (ED) faculty and staff are committed to providing the highest quality and safest care possible. We promise to treat you with dignity and respect.

## What can I expect at the Michigan Medicine Emergency Department?

Once you arrive at the ED, you will go through the step-by-step process of check-in and triage, evaluation and treatment, registration, and then either discharge or hospitalization. Read on to learn more about each step.

- Many patients are referred to our ED by their providers, as our health system offers many specialty services and excellent patient care. However, referrals do not guarantee priority evaluation or admission. During busy times when the hospital has a large number of patients, patients may experience longer wait times in the ED waiting room.



### Check-in and triage

- Our check-in staff will ask several questions to open or create a medical record for you.
- A triage nurse will ask more questions to determine how we should begin your care. **Triage** is the process of checking patient illnesses and injuries and organizing patients based on their need for emergency treatment.
- We will take you to a triage area for privacy where a nurse will talk with you about how you are feeling. A member of our team will also measure your temperature, heart rate, breathing rate, and blood pressure.

- If a treatment area is not available when the nurse is done, we will direct you to a waiting area. To help speed up your visit, the triage nurse may begin one or more medical tests to get your treatment started while you wait.
- Some patients will be moved directly to a treatment area if their condition is extremely serious or if they have a condition that could spread to others in the waiting area.
- The ED uses text messages to keep you and your friends or family updated on your care. You can sign up to receive these text updates during check-in.

### **Evaluation and treatment**

- Your care team will include a nurse, a doctor, and a physician assistant, resident doctor, or medical student to provide care for you, manage your care team, and keep you informed during your visit.
- As part of your medical evaluation, your medical provider may recommend certain tests to help us better understand your condition. These may include blood or urine (pee) tests, an EKG to see how your heart is working, and special tests that create pictures of the inside of your body, such as an ultrasound, X-ray, CT scan, or MRI.
  - Lab work and X-rays often take 60-90 minutes, while specialty tests (CT scans, MRIs, ultrasounds) can take several hours.
- Michigan Medicine is a teaching hospital, so medical students, residents, and fellows may be part of your care team. A board-certified emergency medicine doctor closely supervises the care of each patient in the ED.

### **Registration**

- Once you move to the treatment area, a staff member called a registrar will meet with you to confirm your address, the name of your primary care doctor, your insurance information, and your preferred pharmacy.

- The registrar will prepare a consent form that we'll ask you to sign. Signing the form gives us permission to treat you in the ED and bill your insurance.
- [MyUofMHealth.org](http://MyUofMHealth.org) is our online patient portal that lets you request prescription refills, manage appointments, pay bills, and access test results online. Our registration team can help you enroll in MyUofMHealth.org if you are not already enrolled.

## **Discharge**

When your evaluation and testing is complete, you may be cleared for **discharge** (meaning that you can leave the ED and hospital).

- Before being discharged, your treatment team will review your test results, diagnosis, and any plans for follow-up care with you. You will receive a copy of discharge instructions (plans of care you should follow outside the hospital) before you leave.
  - Talk with your nurse or medical provider about any questions or concerns you may have about your care or discharge instructions before you leave the ED.
  - Talk to your nurse early if you think you'll have any difficulties with getting a ride home once you're discharged, or if you have any other concerns with discharge.
  - Let us know if you need a medical note for work or school.
- When you are ready to leave, be sure to stop at checkout to complete any final paperwork and take care of payments or copays.

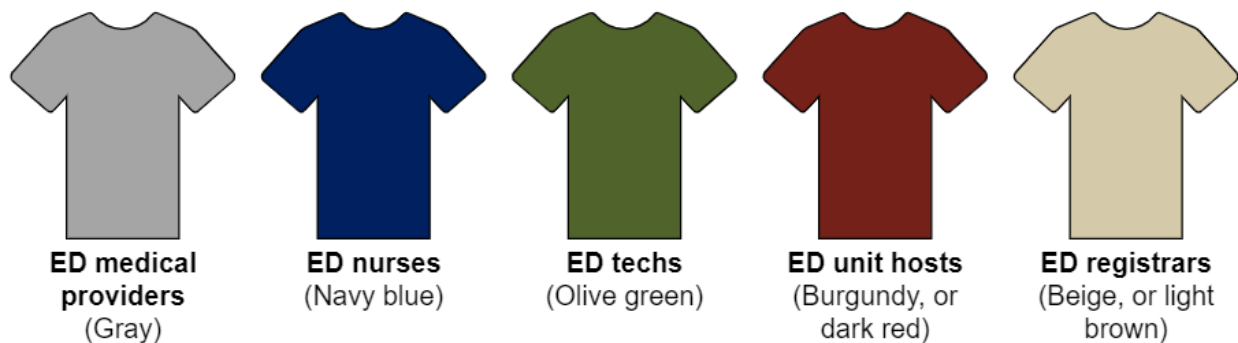
## **Hospitalization**

Sometimes more hospital care is required for your condition. We know this may be unexpected. Please let us know if we can help you with phone calls or other ways to help you prepare for your stay.

- If hospitalization is your next step, your ED care team will ensure a smooth transition to the admitting team that will be caring for you.
- We recommend that you send personal belongings home with friends or family. A member of our security team can help you secure any personal belongings that you are not able to send home.

## **Your care team**

- Our ED team members wear color-coded scrubs to help you understand the different roles of our staff members.
- Your care team may also include social workers, pharmacists, and respiratory therapists.
- Our ED medical team may also discuss your health with other Michigan Medicine specialty doctors. Throughout the process, your nurse will keep you informed, answer your questions, and address your concerns.



## **Frequently asked questions (FAQs)**

### **Why does the triage nurse ask so many questions that don't seem related to why I am here?**

Some of the questions we ask are required by law (like “Do you feel safe at home?”), and others are required for safety reasons (like “Have you traveled outside of the country?”, “Do you have flu symptoms?”, etc.).

### **Why would someone who arrived after me be taken to the treatment area first?**

We may take patients in for treatment “out of order” for a number of reasons. Patients with serious illness or injury must be treated immediately. We may also take a patient to get an X-ray or blood drawn for lab tests, or we may need to isolate a patient to prevent them from passing contagious illnesses to other patients. If you believe that you have been overlooked, please tell one of our unit hosts in burgundy (dark red) scrubs so we can follow up right away.

### **I'm in the waiting area and I'm feeling worse. Who should I tell?**

Please let the unit host know if you are feeling worse, having a new problem, or would like to ask a question. They will contact a triage nurse right away to address your concern.

### **What can I do while waiting to be taken to a treatment area?**

Unfortunately, sometimes waiting can't be avoided. If you need to wait for a treatment area, we want to make you as comfortable as possible. The unit host in the waiting area is available to provide support, answer questions, or take care of personal needs such as a warm blanket. If you would like to leave the waiting area for a short time, please inform a nurse or unit host so we can find you when needed.

**Can I use the restroom?**

Before you use the restroom, please check with the unit host about whether you may need to give a urine sample.

**Can I take my medication while I'm in the waiting room before being seen by a provider?**

Please check with a nurse before taking your medication.

**Am I allowed to eat or drink anything while waiting for care?**

Yes, unless your care team tells you otherwise.

**What can I do if I'm having a hard time talking to or understanding my care team?**

It is important for you to understand what is happening during your time here. Please let us know how we can help, or if there are any words that you do not understand. We also offer trained and certified medical interpreters to help patients or friends and family members who have a non-English language preference, or who are visually or hearing impaired.

**What takes so long while I'm waiting in the treatment area?**

Depending on your condition, the type of testing required, and the severity and requirements of other patients in the ED, the amount of wait time can vary. Sometimes the process of scheduling tests to reviewing results can take several hours. Your team will keep you updated and inform you of any delays, but please ask if you have questions.

**What is the best way for family and friends to reach me?**

- They can call your cell phone if you have one with you, or call the main ED number at (734) 936-6666. We will get a message to you if you have not opted out of receiving phone calls during the check-in process.

- When using the room phones, dial 97 for an outside line. Dial 0 to call the hospital operator for help with placing a long-distance call.

#### **What is the visitor policy for the ED?**

- To protect our patients' safety and privacy, we limit ED patients to 1 visitor. All visitors will need to wear a badge to enter treatment areas, which they can pick up from our staff in the waiting area. At times, if we need more waiting area space for patients, we may ask visitors to move to the visitor center near the ED. We also have other waiting areas for large groups of visitors.
- The ED is a locked unit for patient and visitor safety, so all visitors must be escorted by a unit host to the patient's room.

#### **If I've been discharged from the ED, where else can I wait for my ride besides the main ED waiting area?**

| <b>Waiting Area</b>   | <b>Nearest Entrance for Pickup</b>  |
|---|---|
| <b>University Hospital Main Lobby – Level 1</b><br><br>The University Hospital Main Lobby is the lobby with the piano located on Level 1 near the Welcome Desk.   | The closest entrance to this waiting area is the University Hospital main entrance on East Medical Center Drive. The person picking you up can pull into the circle drive in front of this entrance and wait for you there. |
| <b>Taubman Center Atrium Lobby – Level 1</b><br><br>The Taubman Center Atrium Lobby is a seating area located between the University Hospital Welcome Desk and the Taubman Pharmacy, near the Level 1 entrance of the P2 parking structure. | The closest entrance to this waiting area is the University Hospital main entrance on East Medical Center Drive. The person picking you up can pull into the circle drive in front of this entrance and wait for you there. |



| Waiting Area  | Nearest Entrance for Pickup  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>University Hospital Café – Level 2</b></p> <p>The Café is located on Level 2, just off the main hallway in University Hospital. You can purchase many food and drink options from the Café, which also has a dining room with tables and chairs.</p> <p>Meals available for purchase:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakfast: 6 - 10 AM</li> <li>• Lunch: 11 AM - 2 PM</li> <li>• Dinner: 4 - 9 PM</li> </ul> | <p>The closest entrances to this waiting area are the University Hospital Level 1 main entrance on East Medical Center Drive, the P2 parking structure's Level 1 entrance, or the P3 parking structure's Level 2 entrance. The person picking you up can park in a structure and come in to get you, or they can meet you at the circle drive in front of the University Hospital main entrance.</p> |

**Who can I talk to for help with non-medical needs, like transportation, meals, lodging, etc.?**

- Many of our patients have needs that go beyond medical care. The Guest Assistance Program (GAP) can help you with a wide range of these unplanned and often unexpected needs. GAP is staffed by social work assistants who will talk with you, look into community resources, and help you arrange appropriate services.
- The GAP is open Monday through Friday and is located at University Hospital Level 2, near the gift shop and Cashier's Office. You can also call the GAP by dialing (734) 764-6893 or (800) 888-9825 (toll-free).
- On Saturdays and Sundays, a GAP staff member is available during the day. You may ask any hospital staff member to contact the GAP office for you.

**Where can I get food or drinks nearby?**

- **UH Café:** Located on University Hospital Level 2, the UH Café offers a trans-fat-free, full menu including wraps, deli sandwiches, pizza, a salad bar, grilled items, American and international meals, kids' meals, and

healthy choices. The cafeteria also offers a minimum of 2 value meals each day. Gluten-free and kosher meals are also available. They are open for breakfast 6:00 – 10:00 AM, for lunch 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM, and for dinner 4:00 – 9:00 PM.

- **Einstein Brothers Bagels:** Located on University Hospital Level 2, Einstein Brothers offers milkshakes, soups, sandwiches, salads, pastries, bagels, coffee, espresso drinks, and to-go items. They are open Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM – 8:00 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 6:00 AM – 2:00 PM.
- **Taubman Java Spot:** The Java Spot is located on Floor 2 of the Taubman Center near the P2 entrance. They offer tea, coffee, espresso drinks, muffins, bagels, and pastries. They are open Monday through Friday from 6:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

#### **Is there internet access or Wi-Fi in the ED?**

Free, public wireless internet access is available by selecting “UMHS-Guest” from your device’s available networks.

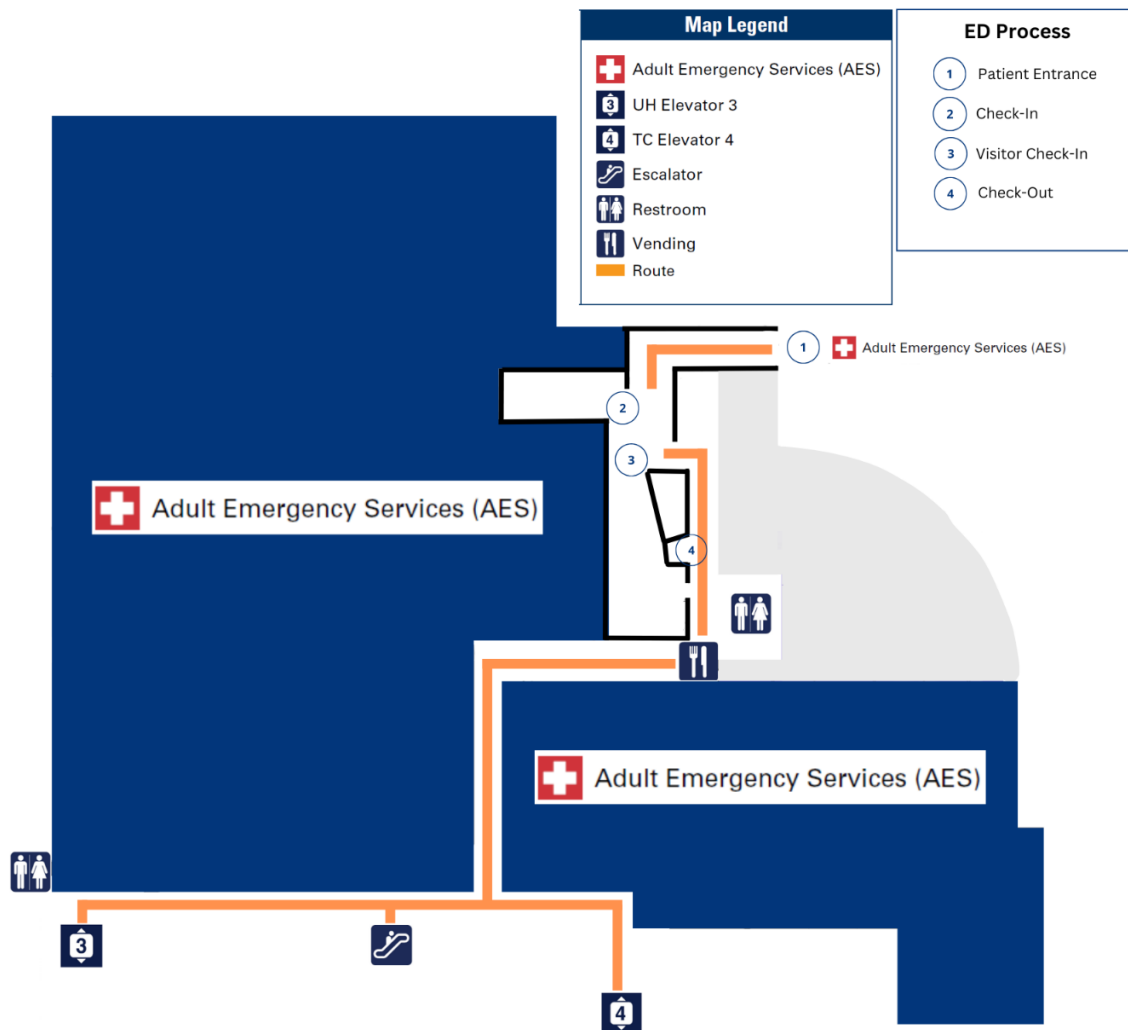
#### **What are the guidelines for behavior in the ED?**

Everyone in the ED is required to respect our patients and care teams.

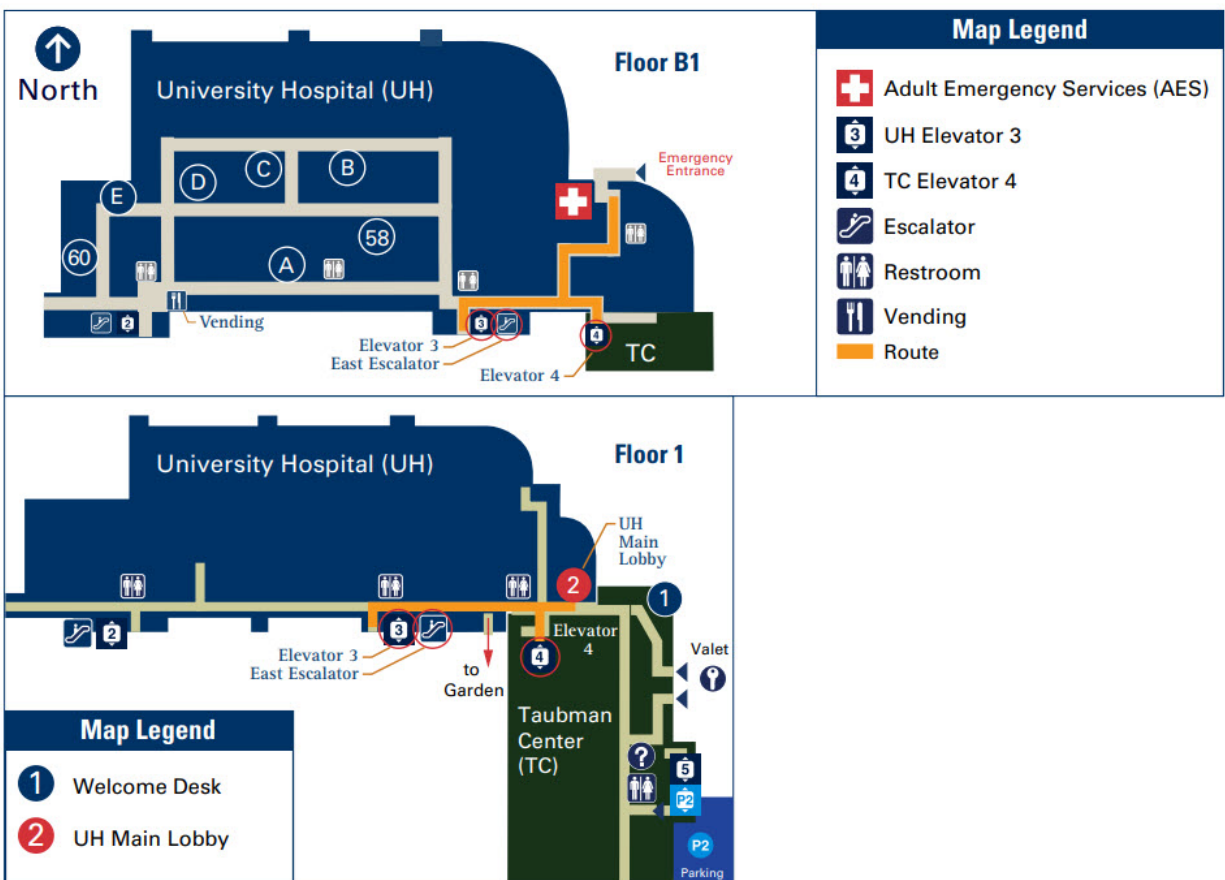
- We are committed to a safe, healing, and respectful environment for everyone. We honor and respect our entire care team, with appreciation for their skills, talents, and diversity. We respect the needs and concerns of our patients, their families, and their visitors. We expect our patients and visitors to show the same level of respect.
- We do not tolerate any form of violence, aggression, discrimination, or verbal harassment toward anyone for any reason. We take all such matters seriously.

## Maps and directions for the ED and University Hospital

### Emergency Department (also called Adult Emergency Services, or AES) map:



**Map of the route between the ED (Floor B1) and University Hospital Main Lobby (Floor 1):**



**Directions from the ED (Floor B1) to University Hospital Main Lobby (Floor 1):**

- Follow signs to Elevator 3 or Elevator 4.
- Take the elevator or escalator to Floor 1.
- Follow signs to UH Main Lobby, located between Elevator 4 and the Welcome Desk.

**Directions from University Hospital Main Lobby (Floor 1) to the ED (Floor B1):**

- Follow signs to Elevator 3 or Elevator 4.
- Take the elevator or escalator to Floor B1.
- Follow signs to Adult Emergency Services.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by University of Michigan Health for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by U-M Health and for which U-M Health does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition, or your treatment plan.

Authors: David Somand, MD, Kaylie White, BSN RN CEN NE-BC  
Edited by: Brittany Batell, MPH MSW CHES®

Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last revised 03/2025