Helpful Tips for Avoiding Hospital Stays & Emergency Room Visits

1. **Establish a Relationship with a Primary Care Physician**

   The Emergency Room is designed to deal with life-threatening medical issues. However, it is often first line of treatment for patients that do not have a primary care provider. Establishing yourself with a primary care physician, as well as their staff, provides you with a first line of defense when a situation arises. Maintaining regular annual physicals with your physician also helps you maintain optimal health and avoid expensive ER visits.

   Always be sure to keep your scheduled appointments with your primary care provider, your specialists and your behavioral health specialists.

2. **Self-Care & Prevention**

   Be proactive with your care by:
   - Washing your hands often
   - Getting plenty of sleep
   - Drinking plenty of non-caffeinated fluids
   - Refraining from smoking
   - Limiting your alcohol consumption
   - Avoiding illegal drugs
   - Maintaining a healthy weight
   - Getting your Flu & Pneumonia Vaccine
   - Making sure you have active smoke detectors in your home

3. **Avoid Falls**

   Falling is a common reason for a visit to the ER. Avoid falls by using your assistive devices. Remove rugs, cords, tubing or other trip hazards.

4. **Understand Your Medications**

   - Talk with your provider if you don’t understand your medications.
   - Do not miss medication doses.
   - Keep a current medication list with you at all times.
   - If possible, use one pharmacy. They can keep track of potential medication interactions.
   - Do not stop your medications without discussing it with your provider.
   - If you can’t afford your medication, notify your provider.

Visit our Urgent Care: Monday-Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.
My plan to identify infection and/or sepsis

Red Zone: Medical Alert

Phone:

Doctor:

Physician Contact:

- May wound or LV site is painful, red, smells, or has pus.
- People say I'm not making sense.
- My infection is severe.
- My temperature is below 96.8°F.
- My temperature is 103°F or greater.
- I feel much better.
- My breathing is fast and shallow.
- I feel sick, very tired, weak, and dizzy.

Yellow Zone: Caution

- Wash my hands and avoid anyone who is ill.
- Follow instructions if I'm caring for a wound or LV site.
- Keep my doctor and other caregivers informed of any changes in my health.
- Continue to take my medications as ordered, especially if I have any fever.
- Monitor my temperature and check for any signs of infection.

Green Zone: No Signs of Infection

Date

Name
# Signs of Infection and Sepsis at Home

I recently had an infection: ________________.

Common infections can sometimes lead to sepsis. Sepsis is a deadly response to an infection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Zone</th>
<th>Yellow Zone</th>
<th>Red Zone</th>
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</table>
| - My heartbeat is as usual. Breathing is normal for me  
- I have not had a fever in the past 24 hours and I am not taking medicine for a fever  
- I do not feel chilled  
- My energy level is as usual  
- My thinking is clear  
- I feel well  
- I have taken my antibiotics as prescribed  
- I have a wound or IV site, it is not painful, red, draining pus or smelling bad | - My heartbeat is faster than usual  
- My breathing is a bit more difficult and faster than usual  
- I have a fever between 100°F to 101.4°F  
- I feel chilled and cannot get warm. I am shivering or my teeth are chattering  
- I am too tired to do most of my usual activities  
- I feel confused or not thinking clearly  
- I do not feel well  
- I have a bad cough or my cough has changed  
- How often I urinate has changed. When I do urinate, it burns, is cloudy or smells bad  
- My wound or IV site has changed | - My heartbeat is very fast  
- My breathing is very fast and more difficult  
- My temperature is below 96.8°F. My skin or fingernails are pale or blue  
- My fever is 101.5°F or more  
- I have not urinated for 5 or more hours  
- I am very tired. I cannot do any of my usual activities  
- My caregivers tell me I am not making sense  
- I feel sick  
- My cough is much worse  
- My wound or IV site is painful, red, smells bad or has pus |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doing Great!</th>
<th>Take action today!</th>
<th>Take action NOW!</th>
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</table>
| No action is needed. | Call your home health nurse:  
(Phone number) | Call your home health nurse:  
(Phone number) |
| or call your doctor:  
(Phone number) | Or call your doctor:  
(Phone number) | Call your home health nurse before going to the Hospital Emergency Department |

Sources: Sepsis Alliance, <sepsis.org>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), <cdc.gov>; and atom Alliance, <atomalliance.org>