After-Hours Medical Care for Non-Emergencies

During daytime clinic hours: If during your primary physician’s office hours you develop a change in your usual health status that worries you, call his/her office. Do not wait until their office staff leaves. Ask for same day care if you feel it is necessary.

There are two main options for non-emergency after-hours situations requiring immediate attention: Call your doctor or ask for help from Galloway Ridge nurses.

1. Ask for help from an Arbor nurse

After hours, they can be reached by activating your emergency pendant or pulling your emergency cord, which alerts security and through them, the nurses. After evaluating your condition, the nurse will help you decide what additional care you may require and, if needed, offer help in getting it. They may institute simple care that does not require a doctor’s order. One advantage of calling the nurse is that someone can see you and thereby assess the seriousness of your illness.

2. Call your doctor

Your primary care physician knows you best and has access to your medical records. After hours, call your doctor’s personal number if your doctor has given it to you for this purpose. Most will need to call an after-hours answering service. A nurse or physician assistant will answer and help with your care. Not being able to see you limits their ability to decide on the urgency of your situation, but sound advice can be obtained on many problems.

UNC Primary care after hours, call 919-966-3820.

Duke Primary care after hours, call 919-470-4417.

If you want to speak to your specialist doctor, such as a surgeon who operated recently, you can often get after-hours help by calling the number the doctor left with you for that purpose. Otherwise, call the specialist’s hospital main number and request that the operator page the resident on call for that specialty. (UNC hospital 919-966-4131; Duke Hospital 919-684-8111)

3) Urgent Care Centers have more extended hours than most physicians’ offices, are open weekends, but rarely are open later than 8PM. They are not appropriate for life threatening emergencies. Appointments are unnecessary. Directions and phone numbers for many of the nearest Urgent Care Centers are located on the Resident Portal and the Concierge Desk.

4) Emergency department visits are the most expensive option. Remember, if this is not a life-threatening illness or injury, you may be at the bottom of the priority list for care, and the wait may be long.