Signs You Need Medical Care

By Elizabeth Smoots, MD, FAAFP

Worrisome health symptoms can show up unexpectedly. When you're concerned but unsure the problem warrants a health care visit, call your health care provider's o ce and ask about it. Many medical o ces have sta available to answer these calls.

Generally, we see our primary care providers (PCP) for non-emergency symptoms and preventive care. Your PCP knows you best and can provide continuous care. Examples of non-emergency conditions: persistent symptoms such as urination or bowel changes, unintentional weight loss, emotional changes, joint pain, congestion or coughing.

For urgent problems after office hours, learn your provider's procedure. If you can't see your provider, here are tips for getting medical care:

- **1. Call 9-1-1** for life-threatening conditions such as severe chest pain or stroke. Serious conditions include:
 - Di culty breathing.
 - A possible heart attack: chest pain, which may radiate to an arm or jaw, with sweating, vomiting or dizziness.
 - A possible stroke: facial drooping; weakness or numbness on 1 side of the body; sudden trouble with walking, talking or vision; sudden severe headache; or loss of consciousness.
 - An injury that threatens life or limb.
- **2. Go to the emergency room (ER):** Following are some reasons to use an ER. Have someone drive you to the ER or call 9-1-1 if you have:
 - Heart attack or stroke signs (noted above).
 - Sudden confusion or a change in mental status.
 - Serious burns or a fever with rash.
 - A head injury or concussion; an eye injury.
 - Fainting or seizures.
 - Severe cuts that may need sutures; facial lacerations.
 - Fractures or dislocated joints.
 - Severe cold or flu symptoms.
 - Bleeding during pregnancy.
 - Severe abdominal pain with or without vomiting.
- **3. Is it simple and affordable?** A sign of failure is spending too much time sourcing ingredients and too much money on them. e plan needs to fit your lifestyle.
- **4. Does it support physical activity?** Eating well is only part of the equation. Regular exercise is important for reducing disease risk, maintaining a healthy weight and improving your mood.
- 5. Does it provide the nutrition that your body needs? It's important that the food you choose is both enjoyable and nourishing. Restricting food can lead to nutrient



Produce Primer

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Fruits and vegetables are the cornerstones of nutrition. Do you often buy fresh produce and find that it spoils before you enjoy it? Here are some tips to keep your produce fresh and flavorful longer:

Buy quality: If fruit or vegetables are already soft, mushy or moldy in the store, they will spoil very quickly at home. So spend your money on hardier produce. Look for items with no cuts, bruises or soft spots.

Store separately: As fruits ripen, they naturally release ethylene gas. is can cause neighboring vegetables to ripen more quickly and spoil faster. Store your fruit and vegetables in separate fridge sections. If your fridge only has 1 drawer for produce, tuck your vegetables into it and store fruit in a separate bowl or basket.

Invest in vegetables: ey generally stay fresh longer than fruits. e flavor of carrots, beets, fennel, celery, broccoli and cauliflower doesn't change very much whether they have been in the fridge 1 day or 10 days.

Rely on the freezer: Frozen vegetables and fruit reduce preparation time. No need to wash and chop — they go from the freezer into recipes easily. Plus, frozen produce stays fresh for up to 1 year, reducing waste.

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