



What is an urgent care (emergency) visit?

An urgent care patient is any patient arriving at the hospital to see a doctor without an appointment. At Friendship, we offer urgent care services 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. Urgent care cases can range from life-threatening emergencies (such as animals that have been hit by a car, animals that are having seizures, animals having difficulty breathing, etc.) to clients who would like to have their pet vaccinated but did not make an appointment with our primary care service. Our urgent care service works on a first come, first served basis with the exception of life-threatening emergencies that require immediate care. Clients can expect a wait to be seen by the doctor or doctors scheduled to see urgent care cases, just as in a human emergency room however, we work diligently to assure the shortest wait time possible.

How much does an urgent care visit cost?

The cost of an urgent care visit examination by a doctor is \$198. This does not include any diagnostics, procedures, medications or other treatments that your pet might require. For any illnesses that require hospitalization, the doctor will give you an estimate of the cost for your pet's stay at the hospital. Please keep in mind that this is an estimate. The actual cost could change, as your pet's diagnostics return and various therapies are employed.

What is a triage?

Triage is the process of deciding which patients need to be treated more quickly, based on how sick they are or how serious their injuries are. All patients that present for an urgent care visit are triaged by a technician. The technician will take your pet's vital signs to ensure that the heart rate, respiratory rate, and temperature are within normal parameters. They will palpate your pet's pulses and check their gums for abnormalities like paleness or dryness. They will also obtain a very basic history about your pet's current condition. This is not meant to be a complete medical history, but simply a brief summary of your pet's current status and reason for his or her visit today. If the technician finds anything concerning, they will bring your pet to our treatment area for immediate evaluation by a doctor. As noted above, patients are generally seen in the order in which they arrive, but patients who are assessed as being critically ill or seriously injured at the time of triage will be seen and treated more quickly.

How long will I have to wait to see the urgent care doctor?

It is very difficult to give an exact wait time to see the doctor. This is because we cannot predict when a life-threatening emergency may arrive at the hospital, or whether a patient that has checked in earlier for urgent care will prove to be a time-intensive case or require an immediate treatment to be performed by the urgent care doctor. In addition to the patients waiting to be seen by the urgent care doctor, there are also hospitalized patients that may need immediate attention from one of the urgent care doctors on duty. A client care technician can tell you how many pets are ahead of yours, and give you a very basic estimate of time. This can change at any time, however, if an emergency arrives, or if there is an emergency with one of our hospitalized patients.

Why are other pets being seen before mine, even though I checked in first?

Generally, this is because the clients seen before you have scheduled appointments with doctors on another service. Friendship offers a full service primary care seven days a week with morning and evening appointments for wellness care and vaccinations, non-routine visits and rechecks. We also offer specialty appointments in Dermatology, Internal Medicine, Neurology, Oncology, Radiology, Rehabilitation/Physical Therapy, Surgery and Cardiology. Typically, those that are seen before you are not seeing an urgent care doctor, so this will not affect your pet's wait time.

In addition, we have many clients who bring their pets in for procedures that can be performed by a technician (such as nail trim, anal gland expression, blood draws that have been pre-ordered by a doctor, etc.) These procedures do not require a doctor, so they can be taken care of more quickly than the patients that are here for an exam by a doctor. Emergencies and patients that a technician determines to be unstable will always take precedence over stable patients because a delay in care can be life-threatening. As soon as the emergent patient is stabilized, the urgent care doctors will continue to see the urgent care patients in the order in which they arrived.

Will treatments or tests be performed on my pets before I have spoken with the doctor?

If your pet is unstable, and time is truly of the essence to help save your pet's life, the doctor might request your permission for certain basic or rapid tests or treatments that would be needed to stabilize your pet before speaking with you directly.

Examples of such tests may include blood pressure measurements, EKG (heart rhythm analysis), or measurements of blood sugar, electrolytes, or red blood cell level. Examples of emergent treatments may include oxygen supplementation, IV fluids, pain medication, dextrose (sugar) or medications to interrupt seizures. As soon as your pet is more stable, the doctor will speak with you.



What will happen if my pet needs to be hospitalized?

Friendship has multiple veterinarians on duty at all times, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The doctor who admitted your pet will be the primary person caring for your pet initially. If your pet stays for an extended time, care will be transferred to another doctor during his/her hospitalization. The decision to transfer care to another doctor within the hospital may be based on a few factors, including the nature of your pet's problem(s), whether your pet may benefit from being under the care of a specialist, and your pet's anticipated length of hospitalization. Please be advised that all doctors on our Urgent Care and Hospitalization service work as a team and are in close communication about all hospitalized patients. Our goals are to provide exemplary care and to make any transitions between doctors as seamless as possible for you and for your pet.

If your pet needs to be hospitalized, the doctor will prepare a written estimate for the care needed for you to review. You will typically be asked to leave the low end of the deposit in order to begin hospitalized treatment. You will be updated daily on the status of your invoice and likely continued care as it can change throughout hospitalization. If needed, additional deposits will be taken throughout your pet's stay.

Doctors will update you daily as well as updating your primary care veterinarian whether they are part of the Friendship team or at another clinic. Due to high caseload and high call volume, we ask that clients not call for updates on hospitalized patients. Unexpected interruptions divert attention from our patients and can cause significant delays in workflow. Doctors caring for hospitalized inpatients will endeavor to call with routine updates before noon and again before evening. Initial morning updates may come as brief calls or emails from members of our support staff. A doctor will call to discuss specialty consults and major diagnostic results. Doctors will call outside of these times if there is a significant decline in patient status. We thank you for your patience and understanding.