

Urgent Care – Is it the best choice for your health care need?

In this age of specialization, it is easy to get lost in ‘the system’. Sometimes it’s hard to know where to get the best care. We at NFM are specialists – specialists in your family and a concept called continuity of care. Continuity of care means that we know you, your health history, your family history, and we take those things into consideration every time we see you. We know the kinds of interventions have worked for you in the past (and which ones haven’t), and our goal is your best long-term health. This is a consideration even with a ‘simple’ problem like a cold, a rash, or a headache in determining what the best treatment for you really is. We don’t just look at that isolated problem, but at the big picture. This may lead us to inquire into other issues which simply may not be noticed by someone who knows you less well. All four providers at NFM will approach your care in this manner.

Why do we mention this? We often have people say, ‘Dr. Wicker or Dr. Davy is my doctor’ when receiving care elsewhere – specifically at one of the urgent care centers in our area. In medical terms, this problem focused care is called ‘episodic care’ versus continuity of care. Are there times when this episodic care is the best solution for your need? Absolutely. There are times when unexpected medical needs occur when the NFM clinic is not open and we appreciate the availability of the urgent care facilities in these situations. Our concern, however, is that we often see reports from NFM patients who have received care elsewhere during times when we are open, have open spaces in our schedules, and could have matched the convenience factor without settling for episodic care.

So what are we asking for? Just this – please give us a chance to be the provider of your ‘urgent care’ needs, as well as the rest of your healthcare needs, unless there is a compelling reason not to do so. We feel that we can respond quickly and efficiently to your needs. We can at the same time bring the knowledge we have of you, of your health care history and family needs into each visit. We do not see any visit as an isolated healthcare interaction but as part of our ongoing care of you. As you make important decisions regarding health care needs of yourself and your family, please consider this factor in your medical decision-making. We always consider it a privilege to be the medical home for your healthcare needs.