



WRITING SAMPLE

Publication: GateHouse Media

Publish date: January 2019

Urgent Care is Likely The Cheapest Option for These Common Things

By Gretchen Heber

Health care consumers have a wide variety of options these days, in terms of service providers. The old model, which consisted of a choice between a doctor's office or a hospital emergency room, has been updated, and urgent care centers are emerging as a cost-effective option for many people.

Urgent care is particularly worth considering if you do not have any health insurance or don't have a primary care physician. For those who must choose between a traditional emergency room and urgent care, urgent care is almost always the more cost-effective choice.

Even if you do have a relationship with a general practitioner, consider that a visit to your general practitioner often means you have to take time off work, which can be a financial toll itself.

Check out some of the health-related needs you can take care of affordably at many urgent care facilities.

Sports or employment physicals

If your child needs a basic physical exam for a school sport, or if your employer's health insurance requires or offers discounts for an annual health checkup, urgent care centers are a great resource. They often have flat rates for these services that are considerably less expensive than what your co-pay fee would be at a regular doctor's office. And for busy people, the ability to just drop in after work or school is particularly useful. Be sure to check with the urgent care facility you're thinking of visiting, as some have a limited time period for special pricing on sports physicals.

Employer drug testing

Some employers also require pre-employment drug testing, and because some companies require the applicant to pay for the tests, urgent care should be considered because of their

affordable options for this type of testing. Your potential employer might even be able to recommend a facility with which they work on a regular basis. Similarly, if your employer requires routine drug and/or alcohol screenings, urgent care centers can be a convenient and affordable way to get these tests taken care of.

Flu shot

Most health experts recommend an annual flu shot, and you have many options for getting this annual chore taken care of, including urgent care facilities. Some of these clinics offer influenza vaccines for less than \$20! If you went to your general practitioner, you'd likely have to pay for the office visit plus the cost of the immunization, adding up to considerably more than \$20.

X-Ray

Depending on your insurance, a visit to an urgent care center may be a less expensive alternative to visiting your regular physician. It almost certainly will be cheaper than visiting a traditional emergency room, whether you have health insurance or not.

Most everyone has felt the economic pinch of increasing healthcare costs. Before you head to the emergency room or even to your general practitioner's office, consider visiting an urgent care center for any of these common medical needs.