

Your Emergency Department Visit

Fishermen's Memorial Hospital

- The Emergency Department (ED) is open from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. daily.
- Patients are seen by a doctor in order of need — worst comes first. **Patients are not seen based on when they arrive at the ED.**

What is patient capacity?

- The ED can safely treat a certain number of patients each day. When the ED reaches this number, it has reached patient capacity.
- Patient capacity is based on the number of patients and how sick they are.
- We cannot predict when the ED will reach patient capacity each day.

What happens when the ED reaches patient capacity?

- When the ED reaches patient capacity, we manage the number of patients and treat the sickest patients.
- ED staff assess patient flow to determine if all registered patients can see a doctor before the ED closes. Patients will be given a coloured handout:
 - › **YELLOW** handouts are given to **registered patients assessed as Level 3 (see back page)**. They need to see a doctor for further assessment.
 - › **GREEN** handouts are given to **registered patients assessed as Level 4 or 5 (see back page)**. They may or may not see a doctor, depending on patient flow.
- ED staff will talk with **all patients with less urgent health issues** about other treatment options, such as:
 - › coming back to the ED the next day.
 - › going to the nearest open ED.
 - › seeing a primary health care provider.

If you choose to leave the ED without being seen by a doctor, please talk with the triage nurse before leaving.

How are patients triaged?

Level 1: Life-threatening	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Your heart has stopped. › You have experienced a life-threatening trauma. You will receive treatment right away.
Level 2: Emergency	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › You have symptoms of a heart attack or stroke. › You are not conscious. › You are having a lot of trouble breathing. › You have a lot of bleeding.
Level 3: Urgent	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › You have a head injury, deep cut, or foreign object in your eyes or ears. › You have chest pain. › You have signs of serious infection. › You have urgent mental health concerns.
Level 4: Less Urgent	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › You have pain or a cut in your back, arm, or leg (such as a break or sprain).
Level 5: Not Urgent	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › You have a sore throat. › You have an ear infection. › You have a minor cut or bump. › You need a prescription refill.

- When you come to the ED, a triage nurse will ask you questions and assess your condition. This will help them decide how urgently you need to be seen by a doctor.
- Patient safety is our priority. If there are too many patients in the ED, it is harder to manage patients safely and efficiently.

How can I give feedback?

- Every day, we learn from patients, clients, and families. When you tell us about your experience — good or bad — it helps us improve the care and service we provide.
- You can share your compliments and/or concerns directly with your health care provider, the ED manager, or the Patient Relations team:
 - › Phone (toll-free): 1-844-884-4177
 - › Email: feedback4@nshealth.ca

*Prepared by: Emergency Department Staff, Fishermen's Memorial Hospital
Designed by: NSHA Library Services*