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:  
› Your heart has stopped.  
› You have experienced a life-threatening trauma.  
*You will receive treatment right away.* |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Level 2: Emergency       | For example:  
› 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:  
› 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:  
› You have pain or a cut in your back, arm, or leg (such as a break or sprain). |
| Level 5: Not Urgent      | For example:  
› 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