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PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

# The Urgent Care Center at MSK

This information describes when you should go to Memorial Sloan Kettering (MSK)'s Urgent Care Center. It also describes what will happen while you're there and after you're discharged.

## What is the Urgent Care Center?

The Urgent Care Center (UCC) is a special treatment center for MSK patients. The UCC is meant for urgent medical issues and services related to cancer or cancer treatments. Many tests and treatments, such as intravenous (IV) medications (medications put into your vein) and blood transfusions, can be done in the UCC.

The UCC is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Why would I need to go to the UCC?

You should go to the UCC if you have an urgent medical problem that can't wait until your healthcare provider can see you. Examples of urgent medical problems include:

- A fever (temperature above 100.4° F (38° C), or as directed by your healthcare provider)
- Bleeding that won't stop
- Flu-like symptoms, such as a cough, fever, or chills
- Any other urgent medical problems

**If you're having an urgent medical problem, call your MSK oncologist (cancer doctor) before going to the UCC.** They may be able to help you over the phone.

- During business hours (Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM),

call your oncologist's office.

- After business hours, during the weekend, and on holidays, call 212-639-2000. Ask to speak with the doctor on call for your oncologist.

If your oncologist decides that you need to go to the UCC, they will tell the staff at the UCC to expect you.

If your oncologist decides that you need to be admitted to the hospital, you still need to come to the UCC first. The UCC staff will help you while you wait for your inpatient room to be ready.

**If you have a life-threatening emergency, always go to the closest emergency room.**

## Where is the UCC located?

The UCC is on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Memorial Hospital (MSK's main hospital). The closest entrance is located at:

425 East 67<sup>th</sup> Street (between York and First Avenues)  
New York, NY 10065

This entrance is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## What will happen when I get to the UCC?

After you check in, a UCC nurse will see you. The nurse will ask you why you came in. You may also have blood tests, imaging scans, or other medical tests.

After that, you will go back to the UCC waiting area until an exam room is ready. As soon as an exam room is ready, a UCC healthcare provider will see you.

Even if you're going to the UCC to be admitted to the hospital, an inpatient bed may not be ready right away. The UCC staff will take care of you while you're waiting. They will tell you when an inpatient bed is ready.

# How long will I be waiting?

How long you wait depends on:

- The type of medical problem you're having.
- How many other people are in the UCC. If it's busy, you may need to wait longer.
- The tests and procedures you have in the UCC. Depending on which tests and procedures you have, it may take time to get the results.

When you visit the UCC, we try to get you to an inpatient bed or discharged as soon as possible. It can be hard to know the exact amount of time this will take.

## Why was another person seen before me even though I got here first?

Many things affect the order in which people are seen. Sometimes, another person may be seen first if they have more immediate needs. We do everything we can to make sure both you and our other patients are as safe as possible.

## What should I do with my belongings?

While you're in the UCC, keep your belongings with you at all times. If you would like a bag for your belongings, ask a UCC staff member.

If you're admitted to the hospital from the UCC, it's best to leave any belongings that you don't need with a caregiver, family member, friend, or another trusted person.

## Can I eat or drink while I'm in the UCC?

**Do not eat or drink anything until a UCC healthcare provider tells you it's okay.** You may need certain tests that can't be done if you recently had anything to eat or drink.

## Can I have visitors in the UCC?

The UCC is a busy area. When you're in the main clinical area of the UCC, please limit your visitors to 1 person at a time at your bedside. Other visitors are welcome to wait in the waiting areas.

For their own health and safety, children under the age of 11 shouldn't visit the UCC.

## Will I always be admitted to the hospital after coming to the UCC?

No. Where you go after coming to the UCC will be based on your medical and surgical history, physical exam, and test results. After coming to the UCC, you may:

- Go home.
- Be transferred to the Clinical Decision Unit (an observation program at MSK).
- Be admitted to the hospital.

Your UCC healthcare provider will talk with you about what's right for you.

## Will my MSK oncologist know that I came to the UCC?

Yes. Once all of your test results are available, your UCC healthcare provider will contact your oncologist. They will discuss what happened during your UCC visit. If your oncologist isn't available, your UCC healthcare provider will contact the doctor on call for your oncologist.

Your oncologist probably won't see you while you're in the UCC.

## What happens when I'm discharged?

Your UCC healthcare provider will talk with you about your current situation and review any medications that you were prescribed. They will also give you a list of instructions to follow, as well as any other helpful information.

# Do I need to tell my insurance company when I visit the UCC?

Yes. You should contact your insurance company within 24 to 48 hours after you arrive at the UCC. If you don't, you may have to pay a higher copayment or pay the total charge for your visit. The number to call is usually on your insurance card.

If you have questions about preauthorization with your insurance company, call MSK's Patient Billing at 646-227-3378.

If you have any questions, contact a member of your healthcare team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5:00 PM, during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit [www.mskcc.org/pe](http://www.mskcc.org/pe) to search our virtual library.

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