

Understanding wait times

What do emergency department wait times depend on?

Emergency department wait times depend on:

- How urgently you and others need care
- How busy the emergency department is
- Whether you need further tests after you are assessed

Why is that person going ahead of me? They arrived after I did.

- Patients are seen by a doctor in order of need.
- It is not always possible to tell how ill someone is by looking at them.
- A patient who appears ok may need prompt attention.

The waiting room is almost empty – why the wait?

The waiting room could be almost empty, yet someone is receiving life-saving care within the department.

Do patients who arrive by ambulance receive care more quickly?

- Patients who arrive by ambulance are triaged like other patients.
- If an ambulance brings in patient who needs life-saving or immediate care (level 1 or 2), that patient will be brought directly into the emergency department for care.
- The waiting room could be almost empty, yet someone is receiving life-saving care within the department.

We know it can be difficult to wait for care, particularly when you are not feeling well. Please let triage staff know if your condition gets worse. If you decide to leave the department without being seen, please let triage staff know before you go.

