

What is the difference between a Walk-In Clinic and an Urgent Care clinic?

Nowadays, we often hear the terms “walk-in clinic” and “urgent care clinic” used interchangeably. They shouldn’t be, and it can be helpful to highlight some of these differences to see why.

Walk-In Clinics

Historically, walk in clinics were a convenient place for patients to go for minor injuries and illnesses when they couldn’t get into their Primary Care Provider and they didn’t want or need to go to the Emergency Room. These include illness, UTIs, sprains, immunizations, and medication refills. Typically, they do not have x-ray, wound care, or significant lab capabilities.

Urgent Care Clinics

Urgent Care clinics were developed as an “in between” Primary Care and the Emergency Room. They often have x-ray capability, treat burns, place sutures, and have extended hours. One of the most significant differences between urgent care and walk-in clinics is cost. A clinic that is designated “urgent care” has the ability to charge higher prices than walk-in clinics. This is typically less than an ER visit, but still significantly more than a walk-in clinic.

Lake Serene Clinic

The Lake Serene Clinic has a different model. We are not a designated urgent care clinic, so our prices stay at the primary care level. However, we have full x-ray capabilities, provide casting and splinting, sutures, burn and wound care, and treat illnesses. We are also Primary Care Providers to the majority of patients that we see. We perform Well Exams from birth to the elderly as well as women’s health exams. Four of our providers are Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) certified medical examiners, which allows us to perform INTERstate DOT exams as well as intrastate exams. Our providers are all board certified Family Nurse Practitioners. Most of us act as auxiliary faculty at local universities precepting students throughout the year. We are affiliated with Western Washington Medical Group (WWMG) which is a multi specialty group that has taken the lead in Snohomish County for providing high quality, cost-effective health care. This allows us access to tremendous resources both physically and knowledge wise for our patients.

As insurance plans move to higher and higher deductibles it is important for patients to be educated about the options that are available for care. Walk-In clinics with expanded services (such as The Lake Serene Clinic) can be both a cost effective and high quality option to keep patients feeling their best.

We can be reached at the following:

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We are open 7 days a week, from 9 AM – 8 PM, major holidays 11 AM – 4 PM