



## Helping you choose: Quality ambulatory care

When you need ambulatory care, you should find out some information to help you choose the best ambulatory care provider for you or your loved one. Your doctor or advanced nurse practitioner can recommend some ambulatory care providers. Talk with representatives from each one.

Ambulatory health care is provided for short periods of time, such as in:

- doctor's offices
- health clinics
- urgent care centers
- ambulatory surgery centers

The following questions can help you get the information you need.

### Questions about care

- Ask about the operation or treatment that you need. How often is it performed? What are the risks?
- Can you get written information about your operation or treatment?
- How will your pain be treated? Will you meet your anesthesiologist?
- Are family members allowed in the recovery area?
- What is the cost of your operation or treatment? Is it covered by your medical insurance?
- Where can you get help finding financial assistance if you need it?
- Is the center licensed or certified by a state agency? Is the center certified by Medicare?
- Is the center "accredited?" Accredited means that the center follows rules for patient safety and quality. Go to Quality Check<sup>®</sup> at [www.qualitycheck.org](http://www.qualitycheck.org) to find Joint Commission accredited ambulatory care centers.
- Can you get a copy of the patient's rights and responsibilities? Can they be explained to you?
- Is patient information kept confidential? Is there any reason patient information is released?

### Questions about health care staff

- What is the training and background of the doctor or advanced nurse practitioner?
- Is the doctor certified by a medical board?
- Are nurses and other staff trained in CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)? Are they trained in other emergency services?
- Is staff trained to use high-tech medical equipment?

### Questions about emergency care

- Is there a 24-hour telephone number you can call if you have questions or problems? Will a doctor or nurse answer the phone? How are emergencies handled after hours?
- Is the center associated with a local hospital? Does it have a transfer agreement with a local hospital?
- Is there an emergency plan? Can care still be provided if there is a power failure or natural disaster? Is there a plan for moving patients to another center if there is an emergency?

### Resources

["Speak Up: Help Prevent Errors in Your Care"](#)

*The Helping Your Choose series is published by The Joint Commission, the largest health care accrediting body in the United States that promotes quality and safety.*