

BROADCAST- Bug bites, poison ivy, minor burn? Virtual urgent care might be your best option this summer

Summer has officially arrived and with it comes vacations and outdoor fun, but also some common illnesses and injuries. Virtual urgent care is an option that can keep you out of an emergency room or even a walk-in clinic.

OSF OnCall offers the alternative option. Vice President-Chief Medical Officer for On-Demand Services Kate Barth says virtual urgent care is great option for after-hours care.

“It’s the mom with multiple children who are sleeping and (she thinks) ‘I have a sick kiddo who I cannot console and what do I do?’ Seeking out virtual urgent care in those options is such a great opportunity to connect with a provider who typically would serve you in that urgent care setting.” (:15)

Barth says there’s two options. You can fill out an on-line survey but a video visit is the best option when a medical provider might need to see evidence of symptoms.

“Maybe the provider would need to visualize the bug bite or something that looks like a rash so we do have that video option also available to be able to assess that situation and be able to give a diagnosis in that case as well.” (:17)

What happens if it turns out you have to be seen in person?

“We all know there are things that sometimes can’t be virtually treated. Sometimes a lab test may be needed or a hands-on assessment might be needed to confirm a diagnosis. In that case, we simply refund that virtual visit knowing that it is best-case scenario for you to be seen in an actual urgent care setting.” (:19)

On vacation, you can still connect with an OSF provider from your hotel or campsite if you have a connection to your smartphone, WiFi or internet?

An online consult comes with a flat fee of \$25 while a video visit is \$50. Several larger insurance companies cover virtual care visits but Medicare does not.

Barth says an in-person visit is needed if an X-ray or inner ear exam is required. She also points out OSF OnCall walk-in clinics offer more than simple urgent care.

“Employee physicals or drug testing as well as those school and sports physicals that we always catch ourselves running behind on where at the last minute a child says ‘I need this for tomorrow!’” (:15)

If someone is having a health emergency such as breathing difficulties, Barth urges hey go to the nearest emergency department or call 911.