

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

Your toddler spent the day in the pool and now has a weird rash that's kept her up all night. You're feeling a familiar pain and you just know it's a urinary tract infection but you're leaving for vacation in the morning.

These are typical summertime scenarios, and instead of having to wait until a walk-in clinic opens, [OSF OnCall Urgent Care](#) offers virtual care options that are available 24/7 year-round, including holidays and weekends.

Kate Barth, vice president/chief nursing officer for On-Demand Services, OSF OnCall, says consumers want health care options that are convenient, like what they're used to experiencing with online shopping and banking, so OSF is responding with lower-cost, easy virtual urgent care options, especially when a minor illness or injury happens after hours.

"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."

[A recent poll showed](#) an overwhelming majority of adults in the U.S. (85%) is expected to travel this summer, and Barth believes virtual urgent care is a great choice for someone who comes down with a sinus infection right before leaving for vacation.

Individuals who want to virtually access OSF OnCall Urgent Care can select an online interview (taking between 5-15 minutes) where they're asked a series of questions about symptoms and how they're feeling. Their information will be reviewed within an hour. Using a chat feature, additional information could be requested before an OSF HealthCare provider offers a treatment plan.

If there's WiFi, internet or a smartphone signal near a campsite, a video visit could be more convenient than finding the nearest walk-in clinic.

"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."

If treatment requires medication, a prescription can be sent to the pharmacy of the individual's choice.

What happens if the online consult or video visit reveals someone needs 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."

For example, sprains and strains can usually be assessed virtually, but broken bones can only be confirmed through an X-ray, which is available at an OSF OnCall Urgent Care walk-in location.

Barth points out, those walk-in clinics also 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!’”

The cost of virtual care is less than an in-person visit. An online interview is \$25 and a video visit, typically lasting between 15 to 20 minutes, is \$50. OSF OnCall Urgent Care accepts [a wide variety of insurance plans](#), including Blue Cross Blue Shield, Humana and Health Alliance. Medicare patients are welcome to use an OSF OnCall Urgent Care option, however a virtual visit is not currently reimbursed.

Anyone experiencing a medical emergency or symptoms such as chest pain, difficulty breathing or severe abdominal pain should go directly to the nearest emergency department or call 9-1-1.