



Surviving the ER: Emergency Room Tips

Before an Emergency	Just Before you Leave for the ER	At the ER
<p>Know your specific hemophilia diagnosis and hemophilia treatment plan. Have your exact diagnosis firmly in your mind or, better yet, written out.</p> <p>Ask your HTC for a letter or wallet card that outlines your hemophilia treatment regimen, including dosage, so that necessary treatment can be administered without delay. Make sure the letter includes your physician's name and number in case the ER physician needs more information regarding your hemophilia diagnosis.</p> <p>Program the phone numbers of your hematologist, pediatrician, and treatment center into your cell phone.</p> <p>Consider keeping a small bag stocked with toys, paper and pen, a “cheat-sheet” for bleeding disorder emergency care and treatment, snacks and water.</p>	<p>Call your hemophilia treatment center or your physician before you leave home. They can contact your ER to let them know that you are a hemophilia patient and that you are on your way.</p> <p>Take clotting factor and infusion supplies (check with your ER to make sure they will allow you to bring these items.)</p> <p>Take an ice pack so you can begin icing and elevating the bleeding joint or muscle on the way to the ER, and continue once you arrive. To help you be comfortable, take snacks, books, music and your favorite blanket or pillow. Some patients keep a special ER bag packed with these items that is easy to grab in a hurry.</p> <p>Take your cell phone charger with you.</p>	<p>Be prepared to answer detailed questions about the bleed. How did it start? How was it treated? When was it treated?</p> <p>You are the best expert about your disorder. Don't expect ER personnel to be experts on bleeding disorders.</p> <p>Be specific with the triage nurse. Describe your bleed in specific and precise terms. Don't downplay the situation.</p> <p>Factor first. Remind the ER nurse that the first thing you need is factor, not a CAT scan or an x-ray.</p> <p>Vials of factor don't always match up exactly with the dosage calculated, and the ER nurse's first instinct may be to toss out the leftover factor. Instead, remind the ER staff that leftover factor should be infused.</p> <p>Be prepared for questions about bruises. If questions sound threatening, stay calm and remind staff matter-of-factly that bruising is common among people with hemophilia.</p> <p>Stay informed and in charge. Be careful about consenting to invasive procedures unless you fully understand them, are sure of their necessity and pre-treat ahead of time. This includes unnecessary blood testing.</p> <p>Always treat ER personnel with the respect and dignity you want for yourself. Your calmness and tolerance lays the groundwork for a positive collaboration with the ER staff.</p>