| Wait Time for Immediate Care for a Minor Health Problem  
(Indicator Set: Primary Health Care Providers) |
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<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Definition</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Method of Calculation</strong></td>
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|  |  | **Inclusions**  
• Individual is in the denominator  
• Individual reported getting a same-day or next-day appointment  
**Exclusions**  
None |
|  | **Denominator** | Number of respondents age 18 and older. |
|  |  | **Inclusions**  
• Age of individual is at least 18 years  
• Individual reported seeing a PHC provider for immediate care for a minor health problem  
**Exclusions**  
None |
| **Data Source** | Canadian Practice-Based Primary Health Care Survey Tools: Patient Component¹ |
| **Notes** | **Definitions of Terms**  
• Minor health problems that could require immediate care include fever, vomiting, major headaches, sprained ankles, minor burns, cuts, skin irritation, unexplained rashes and other non–life threatening health problems or injuries due to a minor accident.²  
• Number of days to get an appointment is defined as working days. |
| **Interpretation** | • A high rate for this indicator can be interpreted as a positive result. |
### Wait Time for Immediate Care for a Minor Health Problem
(Indicator Set: Primary Health Care Providers) (cont’d)

#### Indicator Rationale

For most Canadians, the first point of contact for medical care is their PHC provider. Research illustrates that increased accessibility to a PHC provider is a hallmark of better health and lower total health care system costs. Accessibility to PHC is an important indicator of how easy it is for the population to interact with the health care system.

Immediate care for a minor health problem can be qualified as urgent care for minor issues such as fever, vomiting, major headaches, sprained ankles, minor burns, cuts, skin irritation, unexplained rashes and other non–life threatening health problems or injuries due to a minor accident. The 2008 Canadian Survey of Experiences With PHC reported that 27% of adults surveyed had sought immediate care for a minor health problem in the previous year; of those, 21% had trouble obtaining it. The average wait time for immediate care was three hours. Eighty-five percent of those seeking immediate care were seen within one day, 11% within two to seven days and 4% in more than seven days. Another study found that the most significant barrier to receiving urgent care was long wait times and that Canadians with a regular PHC provider were just as likely to experience problems with accessibility as those without.

Excessive wait times are frequently monitored to measure the performance of the system and constraints in service. Same-day booking or advanced (or open) access has been found to be successful in decreasing wait times and improving access. Research indicates that advanced access booking can improve practice capacity and continuity of care in PHC and increase patient satisfaction.

#### References


For more information on the PHC indicators, data sources and reporting initiatives, visit CIHI’s website at [www.cihi.ca/phc](http://www.cihi.ca/phc) or send us an email at phc@cihi.ca.