

# Emergency Department (or Clinic) Open House

## Taking the Fear Out of a Trip to the Hospital or Clinic

The last place most of the people in your community want to be is in an emergency department or clinic. But your Emergency Department Open House can help participants appreciate the superb diagnostic and treatment facilities available to them every hour, every day.

## How to put on the program

1. Meet with your hospital or clinic representatives to develop mailing lists for promotion, to publicize the open house through the media and inside the hospital or clinic, and set a date and time. It helps to review logs to determine low-volume days and times. If Saturday morning is relatively low-volume, that would work best because most people won't be at work. Try to avoid conflicting community events.
2. Ask your hospital or clinic administrator to determine if any other hospitals or clinics in your area are interested. If so, perhaps they would agree to coordinate the events area-wide.
3. Consider these open house options:
  - **Free blood pressure and cholesterol level checks.** In fact, “drive-through” blood pressure checks have worked well in some communities. Although many of these people do not actually visit the emergency department, it's a good chance to give them a positive impression of hospital or clinic staff and to hand out information about your hospital or clinic, steps to take in an emergency, and emergency medicine in general. Explain emergency department equipment. Present a simple explanation of any new equipment or technology available in your emergency department and solicit participants' questions.
  - **Offer simple refreshments**

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- **Demonstrate CPR.** Find a convenient meeting room and conduct a demonstration of cardiopulmonary resuscitation, the Heimlich Maneuver and other life-saving techniques. Consider presenting a short lecture on first aid or sports medicine.
  - **Children’s Tour.** Have an emergency physician, nurse, or health aide lead a tour of the emergency department or clinic. This will allow children to see them as “real people” instead of shadowy or frightening figures.
  - **Ambulance and Medical Helicopter Displays.** If possible allow the public to tour an ambulance and a medical transport helicopter ‘close up’ Ems personnel can explain what happens in the prehospital trip.
  - **Celebrity Participation.** If a community celebrity (sports, media, theater, etc.) is available, ask him or her to make an appearance during the open house. You can publicize the appearance to generate more interest.
4. In addition to offering news releases or media memos of the event to newspapers, magazines, and newsletters, send PSAs to radio and television stations and post notices of the open house within your hospital or clinic’s service area. Try grocery stores, pharmacies, local businesses, recreation centers. Etc. You’ll find a sample media memo and PSA attached, as well as a sample copy for a flyer. And don’t forget your own hospital or clinic publications!
  5. Plan to have extra staff on hand for the event so there is enough manpower to handle the open house, as well as any patients arriving for treatment. Arrange for staff or volunteers to serve refreshments, take blood pressure readings, and all other functions of the open house. Ask the housekeeping staff to make a special trip to the emergency department at least three hours before the event. Arrange adequate parking for the participants and hang signs telling them where to park and how to get to the event.
  6. Develop a contingency plan with emergency staff and your administrator in the event of heavy emergency usage during the open house. Disasters don’t always happen at convenient times!

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# Sample Media Memo

## Emergency Department Open House

(Your Logo)

### MEDIA MEMO

**WHAT:** Come see a real emergency department – before you ever need one! It's (your hospital/clinic name) Emergency Department Open House, a community service of (your area) citizens. Participants will get their blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked, tour a real ambulance with EMS personnel, see a medical transport helicopter up close, and see how a real emergency department works,. They'll get a demonstration of CPR, a lesson in first aid, and learn all about emergency medicine. There's also a special tour for children designed to get them comfortable with emergency medical personnel.

**WHEN:** (day, date, and hours)

**Where:** (your hospital name, address, emergency department)

**WHO:** Emergency physicians, nurses, medics, and other emergency medical personnel from (your hospital/clinic name) will be present at the open house, the ambulance tours, and other events. This event is being coordinated by (your service's name).

**WHY:** Children and adults alike are afraid of what they don't know. This open house will provide an understanding of the EMS system and contribute to a healthier, safer community.

For additional information call: (contact name, hospital/clinic, and phone number)

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# **Sample 30-Second Radio Spot Emergency Department Open House**

**(Your Logo)**

## **Emergency Department Open House**

### **30-Second Announcement**

Would you know how to get help in a medical emergency? Come find out at the (your hospital/clinic name) Emergency Department Open House on (day and date) from (hours). You can get your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked, tour an ambulance and see how a real Emergency Department works. You'll see a demonstration of CPR, get a first-aid lesson, plus lots more. There's even a special tour for children! For more information, call (name and telephone number).

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# Sample 30-Second Radio Spot

## Emergency Department Open House

(Your Logo)

**“We’ve got the best room in town. The Emergency Department”**

. . .And we’re throwing the doors open so you can see in – this (day and date)  
from (hours) at (your hospital/clinic name).

Drop by and have your blood pressure and cholesterol levels checked. Take an ambulance tour with a medic. See how an emergency department really works up close and find out how you can get help quickly in an emergency. You’ll learn what to expect in an emergency situation, and how to speed things along. You can see a medical transport helicopter inside and out, a CPR demonstration, learn about first aid, and much more. There’s even a special tour for kids. They’ll learn that hospitals/clinics are not scary – they’re exciting places where good people can help you get well fast!

So join us (day) (morning/afternoon) for refreshments and a whole lot more at the  
(your hospital/clinic name) Emergency Department Open House.

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