

Temiskaming Hospital

August 14, 2009

How Patients Are Triageed and Why The Wait?

Some form of triaging has been in place, formally or informally, since the first emergency department (ED) opened. Today, triage is a standard of care for all patients arriving at the emergency department of Temiskaming Hospital.

The ED nurses and physicians use the Canadian Triage & Acuity Scale (CTAS) to:

- Triage patients according to the type and severity of their presenting signs and symptoms;
- Ensure that the sickest patients are seen first when the Emergency Department capacity has been exceeded due to visit rates or reduced access to other services, for example patients with no family doctor;
- Ensure that a patient's need for care is reassessed while in the Emergency Department.

There are five levels to the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale (CTAS):

- Level 1 – Resuscitation
- Level II – Emergent
- Level III – Urgent
- Level IV – Less Urgent
- Level V – Non-Urgent

Triage level aside, there are a number of variables that may impact bed availability and backlog in the ED:

- A patient may be lying on a stretcher waiting for the results of a lab test or sometimes after a test has been completed, there is a need to repeat it;
- A patient may be waiting to have a test performed in the Diagnostic Imaging (Radiology) Department;
- Someone may be waiting for an in-patient bed; or
- An ambulance may arrive with a critically ill or injured patient.

So, the next time you are left sitting in the ED for what seems like an extended period of time, please remember all of the variables that may be contributing to the delay and know that the nurses have assessed your condition and are doing their very best to get you in to see the physician.



Please refer complaints to the Patient Relations Representative at (705) 647-1088, extension 2221.