



Getting the right care in the right place during the holiday season Peterborough Family Health Team, PRHC and Peterborough Public Health working together to ensure your healthcare needs are covered over the holidays

(Peterborough, ON) – As flu season gets underway and seasonal illnesses begin to present themselves, the Peterborough Family Health Team, Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) and Peterborough Public Health are again working together to prepare for an expected increase in patient volumes in the coming weeks.

Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) has continued to see sustained patient volumes above 100 per cent of the hospital's bed capacity as we begin to move into early December, despite [early and ongoing efforts to respond to increasing patient volumes](#). Emergency Department (ED) volumes are tracking to reach 90,000 this year, compared to 83,000 in 2016.

"It is vitally important that the people of our community assess the urgency of their illness before deciding whether to seek care with their family practitioner, a community clinic or the Emergency Department," said Dr. Mark Troughton, Chief and Medical Director of the ED. "We have continued to see consistently higher volumes of patients at PRHC over the past year, and we are expecting those numbers to increase even further as this year's flu season gets underway.

"Visitors to the ED are asked to wear a mask if they have any flu symptoms, such as cough, runny nose, sore throat, muscle pain or headache, in order to protect others from potential exposure to the virus," added Dr. Troughton. Masks are available inside the ED entrance.

PRHC's Pediatric (POP) Urgent Care Clinic will offer extended after-hours care through the month of December, however families should note that this clinic has also seen a dramatic rise in patient volumes over the past year. The POP Clinic serves children under the age of 18 with urgent but non-life-threatening injuries or illnesses, and is led by nurse practitioners and supported by pediatricians. For more information and clinic hours: www.prhc.on.ca/cms/pop-urgent-care. Pediatric patients who have a family doctor in the community are encouraged to be seen in that setting, where their medical records are kept.

The Peterborough Family Health Team reminds the community that family doctors at clinics in the city and county will be offering same-day appointments and evening/weekend clinics. They encourage residents to consider these options before visiting PRHC's Emergency Department.

"The Peterborough Family Health Team is here to care for you and your family, so please contact your doctor's office to find out what is available to you," says Dr. Kaetlen Wilson, Medical Director for the Family Health Team. "Your family doctor has the advantage of access to your medical records, and all offices have same-day appointments available for access when medically needed."

All patients who are at high risk of complications from influenza should be assessed as soon as possible. The severity of the symptoms should determine whether primary care or hospital care is required. Many healthy people with influenza can manage their illness at home, without the need for medical care.

If you determine that your medical situation does not require urgent care (an emergency department assessment), please consider the following options:

- Call your family doctor or nurse practitioner – same-day access instructions will be offered via the office voicemail message
- Visit www.peterboroughfht.com for your family doctor's clinic hours and information
- If you are uncertain about how or whether to seek medical care, speak to a registered nurse by calling Telehealth Ontario (24 hours) at 1-866-797-0000. For more information: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/get-medical-advice-telehealth-ontario>

With the first cases of flu now confirmed in our community and across the province, and this year's strain of flu expected to be a severe one, Peterborough Public Health reminds residents that getting immunized is their best defence against the flu.

The flu shot is free and widely available at many local pharmacies and your doctor's office. Residents can easily find out where the flu shot is available by visiting the [Flu Clinic Locator](#) at www.ontario.ca/flu. Peterborough Public Health continues to offer flu shot appointments for children under five years old by calling 705-743-1000, ext. 349.

"As influenza circulates in the Peterborough community, the flu shot may help keep you well over the holidays. It also prevents you from spreading it to people who are at the greatest risk of getting seriously ill if they get the flu – seniors and young children," says Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health, adding the flu shot is recommended for everyone over six months of age. She also advised residents to avoid delaying getting the flu shot because it takes two weeks to become effective, so sooner is better to reduce the chance of falling ill over the holiday season.

Peterborough Public Health, the Peterborough Family Health Team and PRHC would like to extend our wishes to the community for a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

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