



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Working together to ensure access to emergency care during the holiday season

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Wednesday, December 13th, 2017—Influenza season has arrived in Northumberland and, coupled with the annual holiday closure of many local primary care offices, it is expected to be even busier than usual in the Northumberland Hills Hospital's Emergency Department (ED), especially between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, which fall on Sunday this year.

By planning ahead, and making use of alternative resources for non-emergency situations, we can minimize the seasonal strain on our local ED and help to keep the service accessible for those who need it the most.

Below are a few steps we can all take in the next few weeks to help ensure a healthy holiday season.

Influenza vaccination – Get your flu shot, not the flu

Don't let the flu take the fun out of your holiday celebrations. Protect yourself, your family and your community with the influenza vaccination. Available now from family physician offices, community health centres, walk-in clinics and pharmacies, the flu vaccination is your best line of defense against a potentially dangerous virus.

Wash your hands – often!

Reduce your risk of picking up unwanted germs by washing your hands, often, especially when you are out in public. Regular, proper hand hygiene is the single most effective step you can take to stop the spread of seasonal viruses.

Make note of your doctor or nurse practitioner's holiday hours and—where possible—plan ahead

Many local primary care offices will have special hours of operation over the holiday. Now is the time to check to see when your doctor or nurse practitioner will be available and to confirm your family's prescriptions are up-to-date, in advance of any closure, so you can minimize non-urgent trips to the ED.

Consider Emergency Department alternatives

NHH's Emergency Department is always ready when you need it, but the team does advise that you consider family doctors or community clinics for non-emergency health concerns. Many local family physicians now operate after-hour clinics, accessible to their patients only. Check to see if your family physician has an after-hour service in place. If your situation is non-urgent, and your family physician isn't available, you can also:

- Get free telephone access to a Registered Nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the Telehealth Ontario service at 1-866-797-0000 (TTY 1-866-797-0007).
- Visit the Port Hope Walk-In Clinic at 99 Toronto Road, Port Hope (2nd floor). The Clinic (905-885-0611) will be open every day over the holidays, including December 24th, from 10AM to 4PM (at the discretion of the physician working each day) with the exception of

December 25th, 26th and January 1st, when the clinic will be closed. NOTE: beginning Friday, January 2, the Port Hope Walk-In Clinic will be temporarily closed on Fridays. It will continue to operate as usual the other 6 days per week.

- Visit the Central East Local Health Integration Network's HealthLine website at <http://www.centraleasthealthline.ca/> for a detailed listing of health and community services across our region.

Northumberland Hills Hospital extends best wishes to all for a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

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About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, chemotherapy, dialysis and 16 other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 60,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs approximately 600 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians and volunteers. NHH is an active member of the Central East Local Health Integration Network. For more information, please visit www.nhh.ca or follow us on Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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