



NEWS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE

Enteric outbreak (gastrointestinal illness) on Restorative Care unit – Visitor restrictions in place

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, February 23, 2023—A cluster of patients and staff with symptoms of an enteric (gastrointestinal) infection has been identified on Northumberland Hills Hospital's Restorative Care unit.

The hospital team is working with the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit to restrict the spread of the infection and to communicate information.

The follow control measures have been put into place:

- **Visitor restrictions on Restorative Care** – Visitor restrictions have been put into place for Restorative Care for the time being, with special exceptions evaluated on a case-by-case basis. All other areas of the hospital, including Palliative Care, remain open to visitors, outside the requirements of the ongoing COVID-19 Visitor Policy.
- **Restriction of new admissions** – New admissions to Restorative Care have been paused and patient transfers to and from other units will be postponed for the time being.
- **Monitoring** – Close monitoring by NHH's infection prevention and control team is in place to ensure any patient who develops new on-set of enteric infection symptoms (nausea, diarrhea and vomiting) is placed on contact precautions.
- **Contact precautions** – All symptomatic patients have been isolated or co-located and cared for with appropriate contact precautions. Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) is required, signage has been posted outside affected patient rooms with these directions and staff assignments are being cohorted as able.
- **Temporary changes to dining services on Restorative Care** - Patients will receive meals in their rooms for the time being, instead of the communal Restorative Care dining room, to minimize the risk of spread.
- **Enhanced environmental cleaning** – Increased cleaning of the unit, including common areas and any equipment shared between patient rooms, has been implemented.
- **Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene practices** – Scrupulous hand hygiene is one of the most important infection prevention and control practices to stop transmission of gastrointestinal illness and other infectious diseases. Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene with soap and water will continue to be reinforced.

- **Communication** – The family/loved ones of affected patients have been notified and public notices have been placed on all appropriate hospital entrances as well as to the doorways within/leading to Restorative Care to promote awareness. Updates will be provided as new information is available.

Northumberland Hills Hospital remains fully operational, with programs and services across the hospital operating as normal. The team asks that everyone be diligent in practicing appropriate hand hygiene and infection prevention and control practices when visiting the hospital at any time. Frequent hand washing, particularly before and after patient contact, is mandatory and vital to reducing health care associated infections.

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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, cancer and supportive care, dialysis and 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 63,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than 700 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](https://www.facebook.com/northumberlandhillshosp) or Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](https://twitter.com/NorHillsHosp).

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