



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Plan ahead for a safe, healthy holiday season

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Thursday, December 15, 2022—With respiratory illnesses, including RSV (respiratory syncytial virus), influenza (flu) and COVID-19, still circulating and holiday season gatherings ramping up, the team at Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) is once again reminding everyone to take steps now to prepare for a safe, healthy holiday season.

Below are 7 tips we can all take to stay well and, should we fall ill, get support if it is needed.

- 1) **Plan ahead for prescriptions and non-urgent care** - Pay attention to your doctor/nurse practitioner's holiday hours and plan ahead when possible to avoid unnecessary trips to the Emergency Department (ED). Local primary care offices may have different or reduced hours of operation over the holiday season. 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 so you can minimize non-urgent trips to the ED.
- 2) **COVID vaccinations** - Make sure you and your family members' COVID vaccinations are up to date, meaning you have completed your primary series and, for those 5 years of age and older, you have received a COVID-19 vaccine within the last six months of your last dose or infection. COVID-19 vaccinations may be booked through the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, at www.hkpr.on.ca/covid-19/vaccine-clinics/ or call 1-833-943-3900. Many pharmacies and some primary care offices, including the Northumberland Family Health Team, www.nfht.ca, are also offering COVID vaccination. Learn more about vaccines and where to get vaccinated here: www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-vaccines
- 3) **Flu shots** - Get your flu shot. Flu shots are given to those 6 months of age and older. Learn more about where you can get a flu shot in Northumberland county on the HKPRDHU website: www.hkpr.on.ca/2019/10/23/flu-vaccine/
- 4) **Mask** - Wear a mask when indoors in crowded public spaces and physical distancing cannot be maintained – masking is not currently mandatory in most areas of Northumberland County beyond high-risk health care settings, like hospitals and long-term care homes, where special guidelines remain in force, but it is a small gesture that is known to have a big impact on stopping the spread of germs. Masks should be worn properly, covering the nose and mouth.

- 5) **Stay home if ill** - If you are able, stay home if you are ill. What feels like a minor cold to you could be serious if transmitted to someone else. Stop the spread by minimizing contact where possible and mask when you cannot keep distant.
- 6) **Practice good hand hygiene** - Wash your hands, often, with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- 7) **Make use of Emergency Department alternatives like the NHH Cough, Cold and COVID Assessment Centre or [Health Connect Ontario](#)** – NHH’s Emergency Department is always ready when you need it, but this very busy team recommends considering area primary care offices or other community clinics, such as **NHH’s Cough, Cold and COVID Assessment Centre**, for non-emergency health concerns. Check to see if your primary care provider has an after-hours service in place (many do, and many will be operating through the holiday season). If you have no primary care provider in the area, or if they are not available and your situation is non-urgent, Health Connect Ontario, the new provincial service that replaced Telehealth Ontario in April 2022, offers the option to call or live chat online with a registered nurse to check your symptoms, get health advice, find a health service and more. Contact Health Connect Ontario by calling 811 or visiting their website at: [Health Connect Ontario | Health Connect Ontario \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Respiratory symptoms? Call the **NHH Cough, Cold and COVID Assessment Centre** directly at 905-377-7783 or 1-833-678-2435 for a phone assessment and, as required, booked appointments with a clinician, often SAME DAY.

Best wishes to all for a safe, happy and healthy holiday season.

Media contact: Jennifer Gillard, Senior Director, Patient Experience, Public Affairs and Partnerships, 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca.

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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