



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Flu tips and resources

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, January 11th, 2013 – Northumberland Hills Hospital, like most other hospitals in Ontario, is seeing a significant increase in patients presenting with respiratory illnesses and influenza-like symptoms: fever, cough, weakness, lethargy, body aches and headache.

Most people can manage their flu symptoms at home and those with non-urgent conditions are encouraged to avoid the Emergency Department (ED) to prevent long waits and the risk of spreading the flu to others.

Flu resources

You can assess your condition, learn how best to treat your minor flu symptoms at home, or find a nearby flu vaccine clinic to minimize the risk of getting it by visiting: www.ontario.ca/flu. The website's Flu Assessment Tool for young children and those over the age of 5 are particularly helpful.

IMPORTANT - Go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call 911 right away if you or your child has any of the following symptoms:

- **Difficulty breathing / shortness of breath when doing very little or resting**
- **Continuous vomiting or severe diarrhea with signs of dehydration such as dry tongue, dry mouth, decreased peeing (no urine for the past 6-8 hours), or very yellow/ orange urine**
- **Stiff neck, sensitive to light**
- **Seizures or convulsions**
- **Confusion or disorientation**

Other options to the NHH ED for NON-URGENT conditions

If your symptoms are not urgent please contact your family physician's office for alternate options for medical care, or go to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Your Health Care Options website at www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions.

Free access to a Registered Nurse is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through the Telehealth Ontario service. Contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-000 or (TTY): 1-866-797-007.

Prevention

You can reduce your risk of getting the flu by following these steps:

- **Practice good hand hygiene:** regular hand-washing, keeping your fingers out of your mouth and nose and coughing and sneezing into your sleeve instead of your hands will reduce the spread of germs.
- **Limit contact with people who have it, or think they may have it:** people with the flu are contagious just before they fall ill, and for about seven days afterward. If you're sick, stay home.
- **Get your flu vaccination:** Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health is urging Ontarians to get their flu shot if they have not already done so due to high levels of influenza activity in the province. "All indicators are showing that this flu season is earlier than past years. The flu shot remains the most effective and safe way to protect you and your family from seasonal flu," says Dr. Arlene King, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health. Because the virus changes, we need to get re-vaccinated annually. Annual flu vaccination is particularly important for people with respiratory illnesses like asthma and those in contact with people at risk.

For more information contact Jennifer Gillard (Northumberland Hills Hospital) at 905-377-7757 or jgillard@nhh.ca.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH) delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, and obstetrical care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care, rehabilitation and palliative care. 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.