



NORTHUMBERLAND HILLS HOSPITAL

NEWS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE

UPDATE - Enteric (gastrointestinal illness) and COVID-19 outbreak declared on Restorative Care unit and enteric outbreak extended to Inpatient Rehabilitation – Visitor restrictions in place

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Friday, February 24, 2023—Further to the notice shared yesterday (February 23), a cluster of patients and staff with symptoms of an enteric (gastrointestinal) infection was identified earlier this week on Northumberland Hills Hospital's Restorative Care unit.

The hospital team has been working with the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit to assess the situation and communicate information. Today (Friday, February 24), additional cases of gastrointestinal illness were confirmed on the adjacent Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit; at the same time, test results confirmed several positive inpatient cases of COVID-19 on Restorative Care.

As a result, the Health Unit has declared NHH's Restorative Care unit to be on both an enteric and COVID-19 outbreak; Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit has been declared in an outbreak situation for enteric (gastrointestinal illness).

The follow control measures have been put into place, including limits to general visiting in selected areas:

- **Visiting** – Regular visiting on 1B (Restorative) and 1A (Inpatient Rehab) has been suspended for the time being, unless patients meet the compassionate visitor criteria for end-of-life. All other areas of the hospital, including Palliative Care, remain open to visitors, outside the requirements of the ongoing COVID-19 Visitor Policy.
- **Admissions** – New admissions to 1B (Restorative Care) and 1A (inpatient Rehab) have been paused.
- **Dining** - Patients on the impacted areas will receive meals in their rooms for the time being, instead of the communal dining rooms on Restorative and Inpatient Rehab, to minimize the risk of spread.
- **Monitoring and testing** – Close monitoring by NHH's Infection Prevention and Control Team is in place and COVID-19 testing has been completed; any patient who develops new on-set of enteric infection symptoms (nausea, diarrhea and vomiting) will be tested as appropriate and placed on contact precautions.
- **Contact precautions** – All symptomatic patients have been isolated or co-located and cared for with appropriate contact precautions. Enhanced 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.

- **Enhanced environmental cleaning** – Increased cleaning, including common areas and any equipment shared between patient rooms, is ongoing.
- **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 and Inpatient Rehab 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 Infection Prevention and Control 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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