

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Stay Healthy this respiratory illness season

Northwestern Health Unit is reminding everyone to stay safe this respiratory illness season and to prevent unnecessary visits to the hospital by staying up to date on vaccinations. All eligible people are encouraged to get their influenza and COVID-19 vaccines as soon as they are available. It is important for everyone to do their part to protect themselves and others, especially during respiratory illness season.

The following measures can help keep you and others healthy:

- Get your COVID-19 and influenza vaccines as soon as they are available.
- The influenza vaccine is especially recommended for individuals with significant exposure to birds or mammals, such as livestock, poultry, slaughterhouse and processing plant workers, wildlife officers and veterinarians.
- If you or someone you are with is at higher risk of severe infection, wear a tight-fitting, well-constructed mask in indoor public settings.
- Screen yourself daily for signs of illness and stay home if you are sick.
- Wash or sanitize your hands often.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze.
- Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces.

If you develop symptoms, stay home and isolate yourself from others, except to seek medical care if needed. Avoid contact with newborns, the elderly, and anyone at high risk of severe illness until **ALL** the following apply:

- Your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours after nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea has ended)
- You do not have a fever
- You do not develop any new symptoms

Also, for 10 days after your symptoms start:

- Wear a tight-fitting mask in all public settings.
- Avoid non-essential visits to anyone who is immunocompromised or at a higher risk of illness (e.g. seniors).

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- Avoid non-essential visits to high-risk settings such as hospitals and long-term care homes.
- When visits cannot be avoided, wear a mask and encourage the person you are visiting to wear one as well.
- Avoid non-essential activities where you need to take off your mask (e.g. dining out).

For further information, on COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses, visit online: [Protection from COVID19 and other respiratory illnesses | ontario.ca](#) and to book a Flu/COVID-19 vaccine at a local flu clinic, visit our [Booking a Flu/COVID-19 Vaccine Appointment page](#).

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