

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

February 19, 2025

Increase in Respiratory Illness in the Region

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) reports a rise in respiratory illnesses, including influenza cases, hospitalizations, and institutional outbreaks in the region. To help prevent the spread of infections and reduce unnecessary emergency room visits, NWHU urges everyone to take precautions this season.

For non-life-threatening concerns, consider using the [North West Region Virtual Care Clinic](#) before visiting the emergency room. This Nurse Practitioner-led virtual clinic is available to all residents, operating daily from 12 PM to 8 PM CDT.

How to Protect Yourself and Others

- **Get vaccinated:** COVID-19 and flu shots are still available—it's not too late!
- **Wear a mask:** If you're sick or around high-risk individuals, wear a well-fitted mask in indoor public spaces.
- **Stay home if unwell:** Monitor for symptoms and avoid contact with others when sick.
- **Practice good hygiene:** Wash or sanitize hands frequently, cover coughs and sneezes, and clean high-touch surfaces.

If You Develop Symptom

Stay home and isolate from others, especially newborns, seniors, and those at high risk, until all of the following apply:

- Your symptoms have improved for **24 hours** (or **48 hours** after vomiting/diarrhea has ended).
- You **do not** have a fever (without medication).
- No new symptoms appear.

For **10 days after symptoms start:**

- Wear a mask in public.
- Avoid non-essential visits to hospitals, long-term care homes, and high-risk individuals.
- Refrain from mask-free activities like dining out.

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For more information on COVID-19 and respiratory illness prevention, visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/protection-covid-19-and-other-respiratory-illnesses>.

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