

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
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www.pcchu.ca



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Medical Officer of Health Advises Patients with Influenza-Like Symptoms to Visit Their Doctor or Primary Care Provider

Physicians and Primary Care Providers Have Added Same-Day and Weekend Appointments to See More Sick Patients

Thursday, October 29, 2009, Peterborough

In response to increasing rates of H1N1 illness in the community, Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Peterborough's Medical Officer of Health, is advising local residents with influenza-like symptoms to visit their primary care provider because they have added capacity to assess more patients during the surge.

"Although the local hospital emergency department is seeing more patients for respiratory illness, primary care providers are reporting extra capacity to see their own patients who are ill and in need of medical assessment," said Dr. Pellizzari. "I encourage residents with influenza-like symptoms to take advantage of the same-day appointments and drop-in services their physicians and primary care providers have made available."

Dr. Pellizzari noted that most people who develop influenza will recover within one week and do not require medical attention. Self-assessment tools help parents, caregivers and people who are experiencing illness determine their need for either self care at home or same-day access by a nurse or doctor. These tools are available on the health unit website, www.pcchu.ca.

People requiring same-day appointments for influenza-related illness should call their regular health care provider immediately. Several Peterborough physician offices are providing same-day appointments, in the latter part of the afternoon, as well as weekend appointments, and some will be offering drop-in services with no appointment necessary. The public is asked to contact their family physician's office to find out how to access these services.

Severity Indicators

Dr. Pellizzari stated that if individuals develop the following symptoms, they need to go to the hospital right away:

- Shortness of breath, rapid or difficulty breathing
- Chest pain

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- Bluish or grey skin color
- Bloody or coloured mucus/spit
- Sudden dizziness or confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- High fever lasting more than three days
- Low blood pressure

For children, parents should bring them to the hospital immediately if they show any of the following symptoms:

- fast breathing or trouble breathing
- bluish skin color
- not drinking enough fluids
- not waking up or not interacting
- being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- fever with a rash

Treatment of influenza with the antiviral medication Tamiflu is recommended for some people and will be prescribed by the doctor or Nurse Practitioner who makes a diagnosis of influenza and determines that Tamiflu is warranted. Tamiflu should be started within the first two days of illness to be most effective. All health care providers in Ontario have been informed of the eligibility criteria for treatment with antivirals. Pharmacies in Peterborough will dispense Tamiflu free of charge from the provincial stockpile for patients, when directed by the prescriber.

For more details about H1N1, please visit www.pcchu.ca.

-30-

For further information, please contact:

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