This page was exported from - Shelburne Free Press
Export date: Tue Apr 23 9:22:24 2024 / +0000 GMT

Headwaters preparing for busy holiday season

The holiday season is one of the busiest times of year for Emergency Departments (ED) across Ontario and at Headwaters Health Care Centre (Headwaters), staff and physicians are also seeing an increased number of patients coming through the doors for care. This December, the Headwaters ED has already seen 16 per cent more patients compared to last year at this time.

?We anticipate an annual increase in patient volume during the holiday season and we plan accordingly to be able to accommodate the influx,? said Dr. Somaiah Ahmed, Chief of Staff and Vice President of Medical Affairs at Headwaters. ?A combination of robust planning with various clinical teams throughout our hospital to increase staffing and make beds available, as well as sharing helpful information with the community are important components to ensuring we are able to deliver exceptional care to our patients during this busy time.?

Some of the common reasons why EDs are busier over the holiday season include an increase in flu cases, higher rates of health incidents cause by holiday season activities, limited availability of community resources and reduced hours of operation for doctor's offices and walk-in clinics. This holiday season, Headwaters has already seen a 40 per cent increase in the number of those patients who visited the ED for treatment of flu symptoms, compared to last year.

Headwaters is sharing information with the community about their options for receiving care during the holiday season. The hospital's website outlines the types of conditions patients can expect to receive treatment for in the ED, and other care options for those with less complex conditions; while newspaper ads share helpful tips aimed at helping people avoid unnecessary visits to the ED.

?Currently we are doing all we can on site to ensure patients receive the care they need despite the increase in volume at our hospital. We are also proactively sharing tips and information with the community to ensure that people are well informed about their options for receiving care if they are ill,? said Dr. Ahmed.

To learn more about our ED and the type of care you can expect to receive there, visit: www.headwatershealth.ca/holidaycare.

Friendly tips to help you prevent a visit to the hospital this holiday season:

? Find out your family doctor's hours.
? Schedule any needed appointments before the holidays.
? Fill your prescription medication & stock up on any needed medical supplies (e.g. needles, glucose testing equipment, inhalers etc.).
? Wash your hands frequently.
? Get a flu shot.
? If you feel sick, consider staying home to prevent others from getting sick.
? Drive responsibly.
? Be fire safe.
? Shovel with care.
? If you're traveling, bring your Ontario Health Card, any prescription & non-prescription (like vitamins or herbal remedies) medications and medical supplies with you.
? If you live outside of Ontario, bring your medical insurance information with you when you travel.

For non-urgent issues like colds, minor injuries and chronic illnesses, consider going to see your family doctor, family health team, walk-in clinic or contact Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

If you do need help, Headwaters Emergency Department is open 24/7. If your health issue is life-threatening or you're not sure, call 911 immediately.