

December 18, 2019

When and where to get healthcare this holiday

Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre (RVH) wants you and your family to plan ahead in the event of an illness over the holidays.

“We can’t stress enough that people need to be prepared and know how to access health services during the holidays,” says Janice Skot, RVH president and CEO. “We hope people don’t require emergency care over the holidays, but if they do, we are always open.”

Many family physician offices are closed over the holidays and walk-in clinics have modified schedules which can cause Emergency Department (ED) volumes to be higher and wait times longer than usual.

If you are unsure if a trip to the ED is required, you can call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000. This is a free and confidential service providing health advice or general health information from a registered nurse. Please note that in emergency situations, you should call 911 first as Telehealth is not able to diagnose your illness or prescribe medicine.

If your condition is not an emergency, there are five walk-in clinics in Barrie. The Barrie Family Medicine Clinics locations and hours of operation can be found online or by calling 705-726-1544. The Huronia Urgent Care Clinic is located at 480 Huronia Road and can be reached at 705-792-0933. Clinics are closed on December 25 and have modified hours during the holidays. Call the clinics or consult their websites before heading out.

If you do need to visit the ED, remember to bring your health card, along with a list of your medications and remember, patients are treated based on how urgent their condition is and not on a first-come, first-served basis.

Always seek medical attention when you are experiencing pain or tightness in the chest, shortness of breath or when you experience a sudden drooping in your face, difficulty raising your arms, and slurred or jumbled speech. You should bring your child to the ED if they have significant vomiting and diarrhea with very little urination. You should also bring your young baby (under three months of age) to hospital if he or she develops a fever over 38.0 C (100.4 F) or if you have any concerns with a sick child of any age.

If you have a loved one who is spending the holidays in hospital, RVH encourages visitors around the clock. We ask that if you are unwell you remain at home and send a message through RVH’s Best Wishes service which can be accessed through the RVH website at rvh.on.ca.

“The delivery of safe, high-quality care remains our top priority regardless of the holiday season,” says Skot. “We make preparations well in advance of the holidays to ensure we are adequately and appropriately staffed. Our dedicated and skilled team is here to care for you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.”

Other tips to keep you and your family healthy:

- Ask your doctor’s office what back-up coverage they have, such as after-hours clinics or an on-call service
- Update emergency telephone numbers and post in a visible place, such as your refrigerator
- Ensure everyone in your family has enough medical supplies, prescription and non-prescription medications and test inhalers, respirators, oxygen and glucose-testing machines are in good working order
- Know where the nearest 24-hour pharmacy is located
- Remind visiting family members and friends to bring their health cards or health coverage documents and an adequate supply of prescription medications with them
- Wash your hands frequently, cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze and disinfect surfaces thoroughly to stop the spread of germs, protecting you and your family

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For more information:

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