

It's cold and flu season!

Cold and flu season is here, and it is already a bad one. We want to remind parents/guardians that before heading to the emergency room, book an appointment with your family doctor or at your [local COVID Cough and Cold Flu Clinic](#).

If you're unsure if you need to take your child to the emergency room, you can:

- Call your primary care provider
- Call Health Connect Ontario (formerly TeleHealth) at 811 or chat online with a nurse 24/7: [Health Connect Ontario | Health Connect Ontario \(gov.on.ca\)](#)
- Use the online symptom checker at [Sick Kids: Virtual Urgent Care | SickKids](#)

Don't forget to continue practicing other protective measures such as hand washing, avoiding touching your face, staying home when ill and masking for 10 days after being symptomatic to help protect your children, yourself and others from viruses that are circulating.

Key messages:

- With cold and flu season upon us, emergency room visits are increasing, especially with kids under 5. As a result, wait times are much longer than usual.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit their primary care providers or local COVID Cough and Flu Care Clinic for non-emergency situations. With extremely long wait times in hospitals, these clinics can ensure your child gets the care they need without sitting in the hospital for hours waiting to be seen.
- If you're unsure if you need to take your child to the emergency room, you can:
 - Call your primary care provider
 - Call Health Connect Ontario (formerly TeleHealth) at 811 or chat online with a nurse 24/7: [Health Connect Ontario | Health Connect Ontario \(gov.on.ca\)](#)
 - Use the online symptom checker at [Sick Kids: Virtual Urgent Care | SickKids](#)
- It's cold and flu season. Free flu shots are now available across Peel. You can get a flu shot at:
 - Family doctors' offices and walk-in clinics for adults and children over 6 months of age
 - Participating pharmacies for adults and children 2 years or older
 - If you don't have a health card you can get the flu shot from a [community health centre](#) or at a local pharmacy.
- With COVID-19 still circulating in the community, it's important to protect yourself and your children as much as possible. Vaccinating your child is the best way to reduce their risk of serious illness. Help protect your children from COVID-19 and get them vaccinated today: <https://bit.ly/3yOH65B>
- It's extremely important to continue practicing other protective measures such as hand washing, avoiding touching your face, staying home when ill and masking for 10 days after being symptomatic or after close contact with a person with COVID-19 or COVID-19 symptoms to help protect yourself and others from viruses that are circulating.