

## Be Sure to Know Your Health Care Options Over the Holidays

**Markham, ON (December 19, 2018)** – No one wants to get sick or injured over the holidays, but if you do, it's important to remember that you have many health care options.

While emergency departments operate 365 days a year, 24-hours a day, a hospital visit is not always the most appropriate place for treatment if you are sick. For serious injuries and illnesses, the nearest Emergency Department (ED) is the best choice, however, for non-urgent needs, there are other options.

You can begin by calling your family doctor, nurse practitioner or their on-call service. If they are not available, visit a local urgent care centre or walk-in clinic. To find an urgent care centre or walk-in clinic in your community, visit the following online resource:

[www.holidayhours.centralhealthline.ca](http://www.holidayhours.centralhealthline.ca). This easy-to-use website allows you to search for health care services by service type and postal code, and provides detailed information about that service, including hours of operation over the holidays.

“Hospitals tend to see more patients over the holiday season and this can result in longer wait times,” says Dr. Rakesh Kumar, Emergency Department Physician Lead for the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN). “It’s best to avoid the Emergency Department if you don’t require emergency care – and there are many other options which can provide the care that you need.”

Dr. Kumar also stresses the importance of getting a free flu shot from your local clinic, physician or pharmacy to help stay healthy during the winter and over the holiday season. “It’s a quick and easy way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu,” says Dr. Kumar. Visit [www.holidayhours.centralhealthline.ca](http://www.holidayhours.centralhealthline.ca) and click on the “Flu Shot Clinics” button to find out where you can get your free shot.

**NOTE:** If you are in need of serious medical attention, call 911 or go to your nearest emergency department.

### **About Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN):**

The Central LHIN, a Crown agency of the Government of Ontario, is responsible for planning, funding and integrating local health services, as well as delivering home and community care services. The Central LHIN holds accountability agreements with over 80 health service providers, including hospitals, long-term care homes, community health centres, mental health and addiction service providers, and other community support services. The LHIN also works with public health and primary care to focus on patient experience across the full continuum of health care. The Central LHIN, which spans Etobicoke, northern Toronto, York Region and South Simcoe County, has nearly 1.9 million residents.

### **For more information, contact:**

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