



November 2009

## Flu Assessment Centres

### What are Flu Assessment Centres?

Flu Assessment Centres provide health assessment, treatment and referral services for people who have flu-like symptoms. Assessment Centres in Toronto are being set up with existing health care facilities such as hospitals and community health centres to reduce pressure on hospital emergency rooms and to provide wider access to these services.

### What should I do if I get flu symptoms?

Most people who get the flu recover fully without medical treatment. If you have questions about your symptoms and whether you should stay home or seek health care, phone Telehealth Ontario, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, at 1-866-797-0000. You can also assess your symptoms and treatment options with the Self-Assessment Tool on the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care website at [health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/](http://health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/).

### Who should not go to Assessment Centres?

Flu Assessment Centres do not take the place of emergency departments and are not designed to respond to severe illness. Anyone with severe symptoms should call 911 or go to the closest hospital emergency department. Severe symptoms include: trouble breathing; shortness of breath; blue lips; cold feet or hands; sudden paleness; extreme fatigue; limpness or unconsciousness; continuous vomiting or severe diarrhea; dehydration; decreased urine output; stiff neck; sensitivity to light; confusion or disorientation; seizures or convulsions.

### What services are available at Assessment Centres?

Registered nurses and physicians will provide medical assessment and treatment. Antiviral medications may be given or prescribed within guidelines that specify treatment for those with moderate to severe illness and those at risk of serious complications.

### What are antiviral medications?

Antiviral medications are drugs that work to reduce the duration and severity of flu symptoms. This medication should be taken within the first 12 to 24 hours from onset of symptoms for maximum benefit, and must be taken within 48 hours after the onset of symptoms for any benefit.

### Can children be treated at Assessment Centres?

Yes, children can receive flu-related health care at the Assessment Centres and must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian.

### What is the wait time to get health care at Assessment Centres?

Wait times will vary at each location. To minimize wait time, it is best to avoid peak times such as when the centres first open each day.

### Is the H1N1 vaccine available at Assessment Centres?

No, there is no H1N1 flu vaccine at the Flu Assessment Centres. Check [toronto.ca/health](http://toronto.ca/health) or call 311 for the most up-to-date H1N1 vaccination clinic information including hours and locations. Vaccine is also available through doctor's offices and community health centres. Call ahead.



[toronto.ca/health](http://toronto.ca/health)





### **Is there a risk of catching the flu at Assessment Centres?**

The staff at Assessment Centres have been trained to follow strict infection control procedures, including wearing personal protective equipment. Patients with symptoms will be required to wear a surgical mask that will be provided at the entrance to the Centre. The masks will help reduce the risk of transmission to others.

### **Can I bring family or friends with me?**

People should minimize the number of people who come along as support. Try not to bring more than one person with you unless they are also going for assessment of flu symptoms.

### **I do not have an OHIP card. Am I eligible for health care at Flu Assessment Centres?**

Yes. Health care will be provided to people who do not have an OHIP card.

### **Where are the Assessment Centres located?**

Toronto Public Health is working with its health-care partners to set up Flu Assessment Centres in selected Toronto hospitals and other community facilities. Visit [toronto.ca/health](http://toronto.ca/health) or call 311 for current information on hours and locations.

### **Where can I get more information?**

Toronto Public Health:

[toronto.ca/health](http://toronto.ca/health) or 416-338-7600

TeleHealth Ontario:

1-866-797-0000.

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care:

[health.gov.on.ca](http://health.gov.on.ca)