

Dear patients,

As the weather gets colder and people spend more time indoors, we are seeing a spike in respiratory viruses – especially in children. Below are some steps you can take to keep you and those in your household healthy.

## SEEKING TREATMENT

While many people with the flu, COVID-19 or other viral infections will recover on their own, others (e.g., infants/children, seniors, and those with underlying medical conditions) are more prone to complications. This [information sheet](#) can help you decide when to call our office for support.

**COVID-19 treatment:** If you get COVID-19 and are at higher risk for severe illness, you may be eligible for treatment with the antiviral Paxlovid – learn more [here](#).

### For infants/children:

- See “When to come to the Emergency Department” on this [resource page](#) to help determine if your child needs emergency care.
- See also, [Family Doctor Tips on Caring for Children with Respiratory Symptoms](#)
- Children’s fever and pain medication have been in short supply. Some pharmacies will maintain a supply behind the counter, or may be able to provide alternate options without a prescription (i.e., chewable tablets, suppositories). [Click here for more information](#).

### Home management of other illnesses:

Many conditions we see this time of year can be managed at home, saving you a trip to the doctor's office. Below we provide tips on how to manage your symptoms at home and when to call our office.

- [The Common Cold](#)
- [Sinus Infection](#)
- [Influenza](#)
- [Vomiting and Diarrhea](#)
- [Warts](#)
- [Pink Eye](#)
- [Ear Pain](#)

## FLU VACCINATION

Flu shots are offered at [participating pharmacies](#) for adults and children 2 years and older. [Ottawa Public Health](#) is also offering flu vaccine clinics for individuals ages 6 months - 5 years and their household members. Patients with upcoming appointments may also receive their flu shot in our office at the time of their appointment, as vaccine availability permits. If you do not have an upcoming appointment and are unable to attend a pharmacy, please call us and we will make an effort to accommodate you in our immunization clinics.

## COVID VACCINATION

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**Keep up to date with your vaccination schedule** – particularly if you are at risk of severe complications from infection. This [resource clarifies when it's time to get a COVID-19 booster](#).

**Booster doses** are available for those for those 5 years+ who have completed their primary COVID-19 vaccine series. Book through the [provincial portal](#) or by calling 1-833-943-3900; check here for a [list of places to get vaccinated](#).

Flu and COVID-19 vaccines can be given [at the same time](#) for those over 5 years of age, where available.

**For questions about COVID vaccination in children/pregnancy:** The [Sick Kids vaccine consult line](#) is available to parents, children, youth, and those who are pregnant, breastfeeding or planning to conceive.

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A reminder that masking is required in our clinic to reduce the risk of transmission and protect our most vulnerable patients. Please bring your mask to any in-person appointment.

As always, thank you for entrusting your care to us. We are here for you, in person or virtually, as needed.

The West Carleton Family Health Team

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