

PROTECT DON'T INFECT: COLD AND FLU SEASON AT CHEO



Protect, don't infect!

Every year during the winter months, many people catch the seasonal flu virus, common cold or get sick from other infections. At CHEO, we call this "peak season" because it is the busiest time of the year.

During this time we rely on you to help protect against the spread of infection—when young children and babies are exposed to the cold or flu it can be deadly. We all have a role to play.

Staying at CHEO

This is our busiest time of the year. If your child or youth is admitted to CHEO, we'll need a bit of extra help and patience from you.

Stay home if you're sick

If you are sick, you should stay home and get well. If possible, you can ask a family member or close family friend to stay with your child during this time. If that isn't possible, we'll work with you to come up with a safe solution for staying with your child.

Follow our visitor policies

During our cold and flu season CHEO has special rules in place to prevent infections from spreading:

- children under the age of 14 are not allowed to visit, including siblings
- only two people can be at your child or youth's bedside at a time (including parents and guardians)
- visitors must be healthy (free from fever, runny nose, colds, vomiting or diarrhea)
- only parents or guardians may visit patients in isolation
- visitors will be screened signs of sickness and asked not to visit
- playrooms are only open to patients who are not in isolation and their parents or guardians

Any exceptions must be discussed with the health-care team or unit manager and worked out ahead of time.

Wash your hands often

Clean your hands with hand sanitizer or soap and water for 15 seconds:

- before you enter your child's room (ask visitors to do the same)
- before you leave your child's room
- when you come back to the unit from common areas of CHEO (for example, the family lounge)
- after sneezing, coughing, or any contact with mucus from the nose or mouth;
- before and after eating
- after using the bathroom or changing a diaper
- before accessing the unit kitchenette

Be patient about moves

Because this is the busiest time of the year, we have to move patients to different rooms more

often than we would like. We know this can be difficult and we greatly appreciate patience and understanding.

Keep your child's room and common areas clean

- limit the number of personal items you bring with you (it's harder to clean when rooms are cluttered)
- use the cleaning wipes available in the room as needed
- use only the kitchen and showers in parent or family spaces only— please ask your health-care team where to find them
- prepare and store only patient food in the inpatient kitchen
- never return food or drinks to the kitchen after they have been in a patient's room

Is your child or youth in isolation? Please review the instructions you were given — ask your nurse for a copy if you need one or search for the information on cheo.on.ca.

Coming for clinic appointments

If you have a clinic appointment, we need your help to prevent the spread of infection. Please limit the number of people who come with you to your clinic appointment to two. Children younger than 14 are asked to stay home unless they are the patient.

1. Get your flu shot before your visit.

- children older than six months can get the flu shot
- the earlier you get the shot the better, but it's never too late in the season to get you and your family vaccinated
- the flu shot helps protect those who can't be vaccinated, like small babies or sick children



2. Wash your hands regularly.

- use soap and water and hand sanitizer whenever you can
- wash your hands before you eat
- avoid touching your baby or young child without first washing your hands
- wash your hands after touching commonly touched surfaces like doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons, etc.



3. Stay home if you are sick.

Even if you get the flu shot, you can still get infections that can spread to others. Staying home protects others, especially young children and babies for whom the flu can be deadly. If you or your child are sick:

- call 613-737-2222 as soon as possible to reschedule your child's appointment
- stay home until you have been fever free without the use of anti-fever medication for 24 hours and are feeling better
- choose wisely on whether or not to come to the emergency department — if you're unsure, visit cheo.on.ca for resources on when to come to the ED

