

Date: December 8, 2023

RE: Steps to protect yourself from respiratory illnesses over the winter break

Dear families and staff,

Respiratory illness season is here,

Peel Public Health offers the following recommendations to support a healthy winter break and return to school in January.

- x Keep sick kids at home before and after the break. Children may return to school and childcare after they have no fever and symptoms have improved for 24 hours (or 48 hours for nausea, vomiting and diarrhea). If experiencing severe symptoms like chest pain or difficulty breathing, visit the nearest emergency department. If you have general questions, or are unsure where to access care, call Health Connect Ontario (formerly Telehealth) at 811, available 24/7 in multiple languages, speak to your family doctor, or access these resources available to everyone, including individuals without an Ontario health card:
 - o Regional Virtual Urgent Care Program: [regional-virtual-urgent-care.ca/](https://www.peelregion.ca/health/diseases/covid19/virtual-urgent-care/)
 - o Pediatric Care Clinic: [summervillefht.com/displayPage.php?page=Pediatric](https://www.summervillefht.com/displayPage.php?page=Pediatric)
 - o Chat online with a nurse, 24/7: [health811.ontario.ca/static/guest/home](https://www.health811.ontario.ca/static/guest/home)
- x Practice good hygiene. Remind children to cover coughs and sneezes and wash hands often or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- x Screen with the self-assessment tool at [Ontario.ca/self-assessment](https://www.ontario.ca/self-assessment) and consider testing for COVID-19 as needed. Rapid antigen test kits are available now. Visit [peelregion.ca/health/diseases/covid19/](https://www.peelregion.ca/health/diseases/covid19/) for pickup locations.
- x Consider wearing a mask indoors, especially in crowded spaces where you are in close contact with others, and follow additional protective actions at these links:
 - o How to protect your family from respiratory illness, and where to seek care if sick: [peelregion.ca/health/diseases/respiratory-illness-season/](https://www.peelregion.ca/health/diseases/respiratory-illness-season/)
 - o Fever & Cough Resources for Parents: [thp.ca/emergency/A/fever.html#ermenutop](https://www.thp.ca/emergency/A/fever.html#ermenutop)

- x Get vaccinated and stay up to date with vaccinations. Everyone 6 months and older can get the flu or COVID-19 vaccine for free.
 - o Where to get the flu vaccine : peelregion.ca/health/diseases/flu/
 - o Where to get the COVID-19 vaccine:
peelregion.ca/health/vaccinations/covid-19/

These actions can keep you and your loved ones from getting severely sick. Peel Public Health wishes you and your family a happy and healthy holiday season.

Sincerely,

Peel Public Health