



# NEWS RELEASE

## from Halton Healthcare

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### For Immediate Release

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### Plan Ahead to Avoid a Visit to the Emergency Department this Holiday Season

The holiday season is upon us and Halton Healthcare is encouraging everyone to be prepared to help avoid an unnecessary visit to the Emergency Department.

It's no surprise that hospital Emergency Departments are busy during this time of the year. Reduced operating hours of walk-in clinics and physicians' offices over the holidays have the potential to significantly impact the level of activity in the Emergency Departments and increase wait times.

"We treat patients based on the severity of their condition rather than their time of arrival," explains Dr. Kelly Williams, Medical Director, Emergency Department, Georgetown Hospital. "This means patients with life-threatening conditions such as head injuries, seizures, extensive bleeding or cardiac events, will be seen first. When we are managing exceptionally high volumes, patients could wait several hours to be seen, especially if their condition is determined not to be a medical emergency."

Understanding the healthcare options available in the community during the holidays can help our emergency medicine teams focus on caring for patients experiencing medical emergencies.

"No one wants to come to the hospital during the holidays. A little proactive planning can help you avoid an unnecessary trek to the Emergency Department," adds Dr. Salman Khalid, Medical Director, Emergency Department, Milton District Hospital. "Talk to your family doctor and pharmacist and find out about their holiday hours, renew your prescriptions in advance, and stock up on all your medical supplies. Take care of your healthcare needs before the holidays so you can focus on the holidays." A printable Holiday Healthcare Checklist is available on the Halton Healthcare website at: [www.haltonhealthcare.com](http://www.haltonhealthcare.com)

"We are always here for you if you are experiencing a medical emergency. However, another healthcare option may get you the care you need more quickly if your condition is not a medical emergency," notes Dr. Keith Martin, Chief, Department of Emergency Medicine, Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. "You can call your doctor, go to a walk-in clinic, talk to your pharmacist or call Telehealth Ontario."

If you do have to come to the Emergency Department make sure you bring your Ontario Health Card, all your medications and your healthcare information.

"The Emergency medical team benefits from knowing your medical history and current medications," says Cindy McDonell, Senior Vice-President. "This information helps them have a fuller picture of your long-term health. Also, make sure you bring any medications you need while you wait and consult with the Emergency Department team before taking anything. If you are coming with a baby or a child, don't forget to stock up your baby bag with diapers, bottles, blankets, comfort items and toys or activities to keep them busy."

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### **Emergency Care During the Holidays**

Halton Healthcare's Emergency Departments care for people with a wide range of injuries and concerns. Our teams work quickly and efficiently to prioritize patients needing emergency medical care. The staff, physicians and volunteers of Halton Healthcare wish everyone a safe and happy holiday and thank you for your continued understanding, patience and kindness.

For more information, [click here \(www.haltonhealthcare.com\)](http://www.haltonhealthcare.com).

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