



October 22, 2009

Although the Kingston region has seen an increase in patients reporting flu-like symptoms and respiratory illnesses associated with the H1N1 swine flu, most of the cases have been mild to moderate and have not required hospitalization.

To ensure the health and safety of our patients, we are asking the public to adhere to certain precautions when considering a visit to Kingston General Hospital.

If you are experiencing flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, joint and muscle pain and headache, you should stay home until your fever is gone and you are feeling well.

If you are concerned about your symptoms, call your family doctor before proceeding to their office or clinic. If you are without a family doctor, beginning Saturday, Oct. 24, you can attend a community assessment centre set up at Hotel Dieu Hospital. The centre is open from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., Monday to Friday and 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

If your symptoms get progressively worse and you experience shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, please go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

Patients will be asked questions regarding their health when visiting the emergency department and ambulatory (day) clinics. Patients and visitors may be asked to wear a mask and may be greeted by staff wearing masks as a precaution. Patients and visitors should not be alarmed. These are merely precautions to help prevent possible spread of influenza.

Be vigilant in helping to stop the spread of infectious disease by taking regular preventive measures including:

- do not visit the hospital if you are sick
- cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or the inside of your sleeve
- clean your hands as frequently as possible with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub
- do not touch your eyes, nose and mouth – clean your hands before and after
- stay home when you are sick until your symptoms resolve.

KFL&A Public Health has also set up a dedicated phone line, staffed by public health nurses, to answer questions about swine flu. The line at 613-549-5923 is staffed from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., weekends. Public health is also posting regular updates to its website at www.kflpublichealth.ca.