



NEWS RELEASE/PUBLIC NOTICE

COVID-19 outbreaks on NHH's 1A/1B and 2A/2B units declared over— Regular visiting guidelines resume throughout the hospital

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY, Tuesday, October 31, 2023—COVID-19 outbreaks identified earlier this month in Northumberland Hills Hospital (NHH)'s 1A Inpatient Rehabilitation Unit, 1B Restorative Care Unit, and 2A/2B Medical/Surgical Units have been declared over.

Effective today, Tuesday, October 31, regular visiting guidelines have resumed for all with the exception of patients in isolation for a COVID-19 infection or suspected exposure.

NHH's masking guidelines remain in place in all patient care areas. A reminder that visitors have access to free masks on entry to the hospital and NHH's Community Mental Health offices and will be expected to keep their medical-grade mask on at all times (or over top of their personal cloth mask) while inside, unless eating or drinking in designated areas. No eating or drinking is permitted by visitors in patient rooms, due to the fact that masks would need to be removed.

The following is a summary of the infection prevention and control measures that remain in place at NHH:

- **Daily self-screening by staff for COVID-19 symptoms** – All individuals entering the hospital for work must pre-screen for symptoms and refrain from entering the building or Community Mental Health offices in the event symptoms develop.
- **Mandatory use of appropriate PPE in clinical and patient care areas** – All staff, physicians, midwives, and essential caregivers/visitors are expected to pay strict attention to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirements throughout the hospital. NHH's masking policy remains in effect for all clinical and patient care areas. Visitors continue to have access to free masks at entry to the hospital and NHH's Community Mental Health offices and will be expected to keep their masks on at all times while inside clinical areas.
- **No eating or drinking is permitted by visitors in patient rooms** – This is due to the fact that masks would need to be removed.
- **Cohorting of patients considered "high risk contacts"** – Any patients identified as having a high risk of exposure have been co-located into the same area, tested, and cared for with appropriate precautions.
- **Mandatory vaccination of staff** – All staff and physicians are required to be up to date with their vaccines (two doses); booster vaccines continue to be distributed to further reduce the risk of infection and spread.

- **Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene practices** – Strict adherence to thorough hand hygiene will continue to be reinforced.
- **Enhanced environmental cleaning** – Enhanced cleaning, with a focus on equipment shared between patient rooms.
- **Proactive communication** – Public notices are continually updated across NHH's communication channels, including doorways within/leading to the hospital, to promote awareness of the presence of COVID-19 and the importance of vigilance with PPE.

“While we are grateful to reach the conclusion of both COVID-19 outbreaks on our Post Acute Speciality Services and Medical/Surgical Units, the importance of masking in all patient care areas remains a top priority,” said Ellen Douglas, Manager, Infection Control. “We are, once again, having to remind the public that masking is mandatory in all patient care areas, especially when you are visiting a loved one. We are continuing to see a trend in individuals removing their masks once they arrive in a patient room, while bringing in food and drinks, which is not allowed. This has directly contributed to the spread of COVID-19 in our hospital. For the safety of our patients, you will continue to be asked to mask in patient care areas or postpone your visit.”

For details on NHH's [Visiting Guidelines](#) and expectations, including virtual visiting options and answers to other [Frequently Asked Questions](#), please see our website.

Updates on NHH's COVID-19 status will continue to be communicated through the hospital's website and related social media channels. Community outbreak information will be found on the HKPRDHU's recently updated, which provides a high-level assessment of local respiratory virus [Respiratory Diseases Dashboard](#) activity.

Media contact: Amy Seymour, Communications Officer, aseymour@nhh.ca or 905-372-6811 ext. 4009.

About Northumberland Hills Hospital – Located approximately 100 kilometres east of Toronto, NHH delivers a broad range of acute, post-acute, outpatient and diagnostic services. Acute services include emergency and intensive care, medical/surgical care, obstetrical care and palliative care. Post-acute specialty services (PASS) include restorative care and rehabilitation. Mental health care, cancer and supportive care, dialysis and other ambulatory care clinics are offered on an outpatient basis through partnerships with regional centres and nearby specialists. NHH offers a full range of diagnostic services, including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) and mammography. The hospital serves the catchment area of west Northumberland County. A mixed urban and rural population of approximately 63,000 residents, west Northumberland comprises the Town of Cobourg, the Municipality of Port Hope, Alderville First Nation and the townships of Hamilton, Cramahe and Alnwick/Haldimand. NHH employs more than 700 people and relies on the additional support provided by physicians, midwives and volunteers. NHH is an active member of Ontario Health (East)—formerly the Central East Local Health Integration Network—and the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. For more information, please visit nhh.ca or follow us on Facebook [@northumberlandhillshosp](#) or Twitter [@NorHillsHosp](#).

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