



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**December 14, 2022**

**Elgin residents are encouraged to know their options for managing respiratory illnesses**

St. Thomas, ON – Partners of the Elgin Ontario Health Team (OHT) issued a [joint letter](#) to the community today regarding the triple threat of influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and COVID-19, which is making many residents sick – especially children. We are witnessing a higher volume of calls from worried community members to family doctor’s offices and other primary care provider clinics.

“There are several respiratory viruses circulating in our communities and combined with a shortage of fever and pain-reducing medications for children, this is creating worry and concern as well as a strain on our local health care resources,” said Dr. Kellie Scott, a St. Thomas Family Physician & Primary Care Lead with the Elgin Ontario Health Team. “We hope to ensure our local population is aware of how and where to access the advice or care they need, when they need it. This will alleviate pressures on our local emergency department and primary care offices and help those able to self-manage their conditions safely.”

“We’re hoping that through this awareness campaign, we can alleviate fear in the community, share credible resources, and offer residents options for accessing care, aside from visiting the Emergency Department for non-urgent care,” said Dr. Scott.

Most of the time, these respiratory illnesses can be safely managed at home, and symptoms can be treated with medicines such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil). If community members can’t find these medicines, they are encouraged to talk to their pharmacist to locate appropriate medications and dosing.

Parents and guardians know their children best and should reach out to their primary care provider if they have concerns. If you do not have a primary care provider, please consider accessing the St. Thomas Walk-in Clinic.

Emergency Departments are currently very busy; however, in some cases, it is the best place to get the right care. If adults or children are experiencing any of the following, go to the closest Emergency Department or call 9-1-1:

**For adults**, severe symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath or rapid breathing or limited activity because of your breathing
- Sweating
- Chest pain
- Loss of consciousness
- Confusion

**For children**, severe symptoms include:

- Working hard or straining to breathe – for example, the lower chest and belly is moving in more than normal when the child breathes, the child is grunting, or the child’s nostrils are flaring
- Bluish nails or skin
- Unable to breastfeed or drink
- Very sleepy or difficult to wake
- Peeing less than usual
- Fever with rash
- Seizures or convulsions
- Fever in an infant younger than 3 months

If you or your family member are ill, contact your family doctor, nurse practitioner, community health centre, or if you do not have a primary care provider, consider accessing the St. Thomas Walk-in Clinic.

Elgin residents can learn about other health care options through the following resources:

- Urgent online medical care services for children and youth: [UrgentCareOntario.ca](https://www.urgentcareontario.ca) or
- Non-urgent guidance and advice through [Health Connect Ontario](https://www.healthconnectontario.ca); (call 811 or access [online](https://www.healthconnectontario.ca)).

Health Connect Ontario's [assessment tool](#) can provide more information on symptoms and advice for the next steps.

Numerous local health care partners are preparing to offer the community additional levels of service to combat the recent increase in respiratory illnesses. Further information will be shared with the community as soon as it becomes available.

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#### About Ontario Health Teams (OHT)

*OHTs are a model of organizing and delivering healthcare to better connect patients and providers in their communities and improve patient outcomes. Integrated care teams are working to ensure patients experience better-coordinated health care that allows them to access and navigate the system more easily, and to be better supported as they transition from one healthcare provider or from one setting to another.*

Learn more about the Elgin OHT: [Elgin Ontario Health Team](#)