

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

HALIFAX REGIONAL RESTRICTS VISITATION

Move Designed to Help Prevent Spread of Flu Virus

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC (September 28, 2009)—Halifax Regional is restricting visitors to the Medical Center to help reduce the number of flu cases in the community.

The Medical Center is experiencing an increase of 25-50 percent in visits to the Emergency Care Center because of the flu.

“We are concerned that exposing people to the flu virus will increase the incidence in the community,” said Will Mahone, president of Halifax Regional. “We understand the value of family and friends visiting their loved ones, but we believe these restrictions are necessary at this time to help keep the community healthy.” The restrictions are being placed on people who are at high-risk, Mahone said. They include

- Children 5 years of age and under are not allowed in the Medical Center.
- Older children and teens are asked not to visit because of the high rate of flu among young people.
- Pregnant women are discouraged from visiting.
- Adults 65 and older are requested not to visit the Medical Center. “We suggest that adults visit by phone,” Mahone said.
- Only one adult will be allowed with a patient in the Emergency Care Center.
- People who are ill should not visit Halifax Regional, unless they are seeking treatment.

Those who do visit should use proper hand hygiene. The Medical Center has placed hand sanitizers at the main, outpatient and Emergency Care Center entrances.

“Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person by coughing and/or sneezing,” said Susan Bullock, RN, infection control nurse. “Sometimes you may catch the flu by touching something that has been infected with the virus and then you touch your nose or mouth.”

Halifax Regional recommends anyone with flu symptoms stay home and avoid contact with others as much as possible. Symptoms for H1N1 and the seasonal flu are similar. They include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, chills, fatigue, running or stuffy nose, headache, diarrhea and vomiting. “Most people will recover from the flu in about a week without any lasting effects,” Bullock said.

If you are sick, contact your medical provider before seeking care in person. “If you are at risk of complications or concerned about your illness, call your medical provider,” said Bullock.

If you must leave home, you should cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. Stay away from work, school or community activities for 24 hours after your fever has returned to normal without medication.

You should come to the Emergency Care Center if you have the following conditions: difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, flu-like symptoms that improve and then return with fever and more severe cough.

Our emergency room gives priority to people with true medical emergencies. More patients with mild cases of the flu increase the wait time for everyone,” Bullock explained. “Unless you are very sick, you probably do not need to come to the emergency room.”

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov. A downloaded brochure has been posted on Halifax Regional’s web site, www.halifaxregional.us.

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 206-beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.us.