

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

Halifax Regional Handles Surge in Emergency Department Extremely High Patient Volume Leading to Increased Wait Time

ROANOKE RAPIDS, NC (November 27, 2012)—Halifax Regional’s Emergency Care Center is experiencing long wait times in its emergency department due to a higher than usual volume of patients experiencing viral respiratory infections, nausea and vomiting. Over the last five days, the surge in patient volume to the emergency department has been steady.

As each emergency is unique, wait time may be longer or shorter. Top priority is given patients affected by a life-threatening illness or injury. During this period of heavy volume, the medical center has increased staff to address the surge.

Common viral respiratory diseases can be characterized by fever and one or more cold symptoms such as chills, headache, body ache, weakness, and loss of appetite. Infants may experience vomiting and diarrhea. Infection with viruses in the respiratory tract can cause complications such as tonsillitis, laryngitis, bronchitis, pneumonia. Symptoms can appear from 1-10 days after exposure to the viruses.

In an effort to alleviate the heavy patient volume and increased wait time, the community is urged to contact their primary care physician as a first line of defense. If experiencing severe symptoms, difficulty breathing, or have other underlying health issues, the emergency department is recommended as the best place for medical care.

“Flu season” is underway and basic precautionary measures are encouraged. Vaccination is strongly recommended as a measure to decrease the risk of influenza.

Proper hygiene remains the best defense to prevent common viral respiratory diseases. Good personal hygiene to prevent getting sick and spreading germs includes:

- Covering the mouth when coughing and sneezing;

- Sanitary disposal of discharges from mouth and nose; and
- Frequent hand-washing with soap and water.

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.