Wednesday, October 22, 2014

Re: Protecting your family from respiratory illnesses

Cold and flu season is here and York Region Public Health would like to provide you with information on protecting yourself and your family from common respiratory illnesses, such as influenza, enterovirus and rhinovirus.

Respiratory illnesses can spread quickly from person-to-person when someone who is ill coughs, sneezes or touches common surfaces such as taps, toys, light switches and doorknobs with unclean hands.

You can prevent you and your family from getting and spreading respiratory illness by:

- Keeping healthy by eating healthy foods, being physically active and ensuring your immunizations are up-to-date, including the seasonal flu shot available in early November
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick
- Washing your hands often with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available
- Coughing and sneezing into your sleeve or a tissue, not your hand, and throwing away used tissues immediately
- Avoiding touching your face
- Cleaning and disinfecting common surfaces
- Staying home when you are sick

Symptoms of respiratory illness vary and can include: headache, chills, cough, fever (over 38 degrees Celsius or 100 degrees Fahrenheit), muscle aches and fatigue, running nose, sneezing, sore throat, watery eyes and loss of appetite. Children may have other symptoms such as ear aches, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

If you have a respiratory condition such as asthma, you can develop a more serious illness when you catch a cold. If you or your child are sick and do not improve, contact your health care provider.

For more information about respiratory illnesses, you can visit www.york.ca/health or call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 or TTY 1-866-252-9933.

Sincerely,

Joy Marshall   Leanne MacFarlane
Manager, Communicable Diseases   Acting Manager, Communicable Diseases

JM,LM/sy