



PRESS RELEASE

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E.R. visits climb with flu

Jan. 9, 2018 — With flu cases mounting, the number of people seeking care in the Emergency Department at JPS reached nearly 400 on Monday, up from 321 on January 1 and well above daily averages for the previous three months.

Patients without life-threatening symptoms are advised to consider their options before seeking care in an emergency room, as hospitals across North Texas report growing flu-related demand for emergency services. In the E.R., patients with the most severe illness (or injuries) are seen first. Wait times will be longer for people whose lives are not in imminent danger, who could seek care in a less acute setting such as an urgent care center or a primary care provider's office.

In fact, most flu patients will recover at home. "Most people with the flu do not need to come to the emergency room, urgent care or even my clinic," said Chief Family Medicine Resident Rebecca Newton, MD. "Most people with the flu should stay home," where they can rest, drink lots of fluids, avoid exposing others to the flu and protect themselves from exposure to other viruses circulating in the community.

Reasons to go to the emergency room include difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, or flu symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough.

The daily average in the Emergency Department for the last three months of 2017 ranged from 325 to 332. JPS is home to the only Level I Trauma Center in Tarrant County, equipped for the most severe life-threatening injuries.

By the numbers

Positive flu tests at John Peter Smith Hospital (inpatient, E.R. and Urgent Care) in January: 187

Flu-related patient encounters in JPS community clinics (flu shots and flu symptoms), October 1-December 31: 65,536

Tamiflu (or generic equivalent) prescriptions filled at JPS pharmacies January 1-7: 194

Tamiflu prescriptions filled in December: 446