

# HELP YOURSELF AND THE HEALTH SYSTEM - GET A FLU SHOT

If you have had the experience of going to a hospital in southern Ontario recently, especially if you entered through the emergency ward, there is a good chance you experienced first-hand what it's like when hospitals are stretched to the limit. ERs are jammed. Corridors can be lined with beds occupied by people waiting for a bed. Harried staff do the best they can, and they nearly always do a good job, but they, too, are stretched to the limit.

You may have waited hours in the ER, you may have received hallway health care. You have or are experiencing what it's like in one of many Ontario hospitals that are operating at more than 100 per cent capacity.

Now try to imagine what it could be like when thousands of Ontarians, stricken by the flu, flock to ERs for treatment. Try to imagine the incremental strain on staff and facilities. Imagine the impact on already overburdened ambulance and paramedic care. This isn't fear mongering. It's a real threat.

Average citizens cannot fix what's wrong with Ontario hospitals. But what if there was something you could do to reduce - by as much as half - your chances of ending up in a jammed ER or hospital corridor?

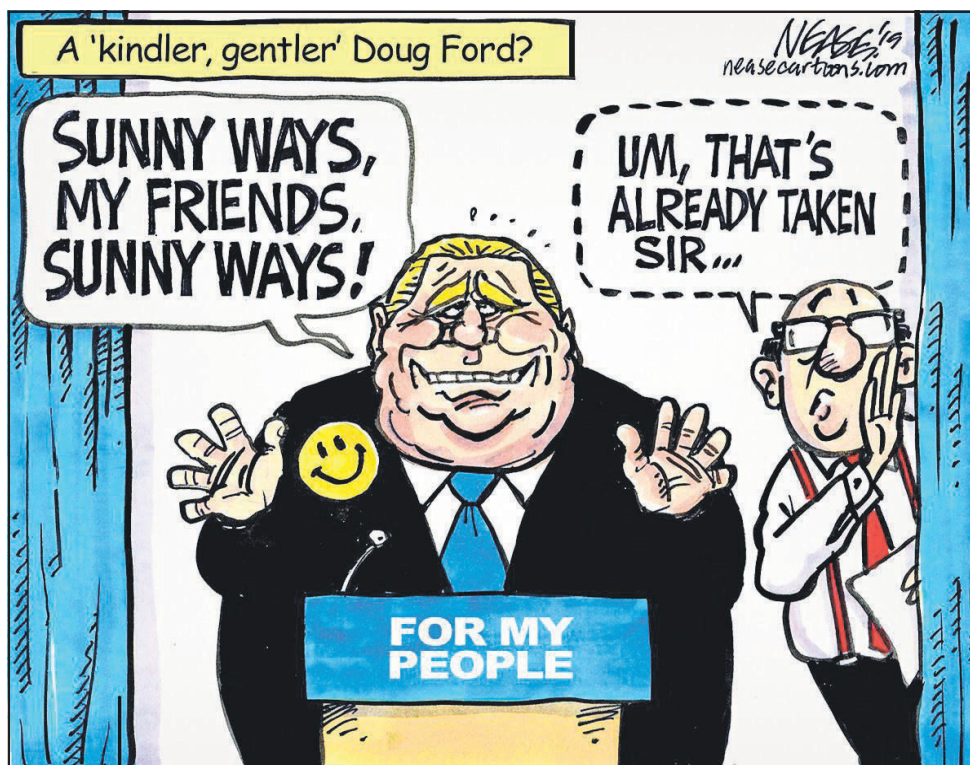
There is, and it's not hard. It won't cost you any money. It's free. All you have to do is go to a pharmacy, your doctor's office, a public clinic or another location that administers flu shots. Simply by doing that, you will be reducing by 50 per cent the chance of catching the flu. Add in good hygiene - following proper handwashing guidelines, for example - and you can reduce your chances even more.

Given all this, and the unpleasant alternatives, you might think the majority of sensible Canadians would get vaccinated against the flu. You'd be wrong. Experts say only about one-third of Canadians get flu shots. If you're among the two-thirds who don't, you're part of the problem.

Why don't more people get flu shots? In part, it's the fictitious scare tactics of the anti-vaxxer movement. In part, it's that the vaccine can sometimes cause you to feel ill, although not nearly as ill as if you got the real thing. But yes, sometimes side effects like fever and chills do happen as your body begins to make antibodies to ward off the bug. Some say no because they think they can actually catch the flu from the vaccination. You can't. The vaccine has no live flu virus component - you cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine.

Public health officials say this year's vaccine is deemed to be about 50 per cent effective. It's not perfect, but is better than other recent years. And more importantly, it's the best chance you have of avoiding the flu virus. It makes no sense - absolutely none - to say no to a flu shot. It's actually irresponsible given the critical situation in public health. Be part of the solution, not the problem.

TO LEARN HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR OWN CONTENT VISIT THEIFP.CA



## LETTERS & COMMENTARY

### SMILE COOKIE BIG FUNDRAISER FOR FOOD4THOUGHT

Each year, Tim Hortons' Smile Cookie campaign raises dollars to support local charities.

Halton Food4Thought is proud to have been selected again this year as a 2019 Tim Hortons Smile Cookie partner recipient.

Official Smile Cookie sales at Tim Hortons' Acton and Georgetown restaurants from Sept. 16-22 raised \$4,953.07 in support of our local students, making this year's campaign the biggest ever.

Thank you to the amazing Tim Hortons staff team, which over the past six years has contributed more than \$21,000 from Smile Cookie sales to local Halton Food4Thought student nutrition programs. Wow!

NANCY RUMPLE  
HALTON FOOD4THOUGHT

### ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF KINDNESS

We had just returned to our car after attending the



Nancy Rumble photo

Acton and Georgetown residents helped Tim Hortons collect \$4953.07 to support local students through Smile Cookie purchases.

Georgetown Remembrance Day Service when I noticed keys wedged under the windshield wiper.

We had obviously dropped them when leaving the car. They included a keyless fob, which are expensive to replace, and someone must have seen the keys and matched them to our car.

We obviously don't know who did this but - thank you so much.

Another example of Georgetown people's kindness and consideration.

ALAN WOOSNAM

### OVERWHELMED BY STRANGER'S GESTURE

On Oct. 31, my husband David and I were dining at The Bridgewood and a complete stranger paid our bill.

We were overwhelmed with gratitude for the generous gesture. We will pay it forward.

Georgetown is a wonderful community we live in.

MAUREEN GEDNEY,  
GEORGETOWN

## ABOUT US

This newspaper, published every Thursday, is a division of the Metroland Media Group Ltd., a wholly-owned subsidiary of Torstar Corporation. The Metroland family of newspapers is comprised of more than 80 community publications across Ontario.

This newspaper is a member of the National NewsMedia Council. Complainants are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of the newspaper and, if not satisfied, write The National NewsMedia Council, Suite 200, 890 Yonge St., Toronto, ON M4W 2H2. Phone: 416-340-1981

Web: www.mediacouncil.ca



newsroom@theifp.ca  
IndependentAndFreePress  
@IFP\_11

## WHO WE ARE

- Publisher**  
Kelly Montague
- Regional General Manager**  
Steve Foreman
- Regional Managing Editor**  
Catherine O'Hara
- Managing Editor**  
Karen Miceli
- Distribution Representative**  
Iouliana Polar
- Real Estate**  
Kristie Pells
- Regional Production Manager**  
Manuel Garcia
- Production**  
Shelli Harrison
- Halton Media General Manager**  
Vicki Dillane

## CONTACT US

**The Independent & Free Press**  
280 Guelph Street, Unit 77  
Georgetown, ON L7G 4B1  
Phone: 905-873-0301  
Classifieds: 1-800-263-6480  
Fax: 905-873-0398

**Letters to the editor**  
All letters must be fewer than 320 words and include your name and telephone number for verification purposes. We reserve the right to edit, condense or reject letters. Published letters will appear in print and/or online at theifp.ca

**Delivery**  
For all delivery inquiries, please e-mail lpolar@mittoncanadianchampion.com or call 905-234-1019.

