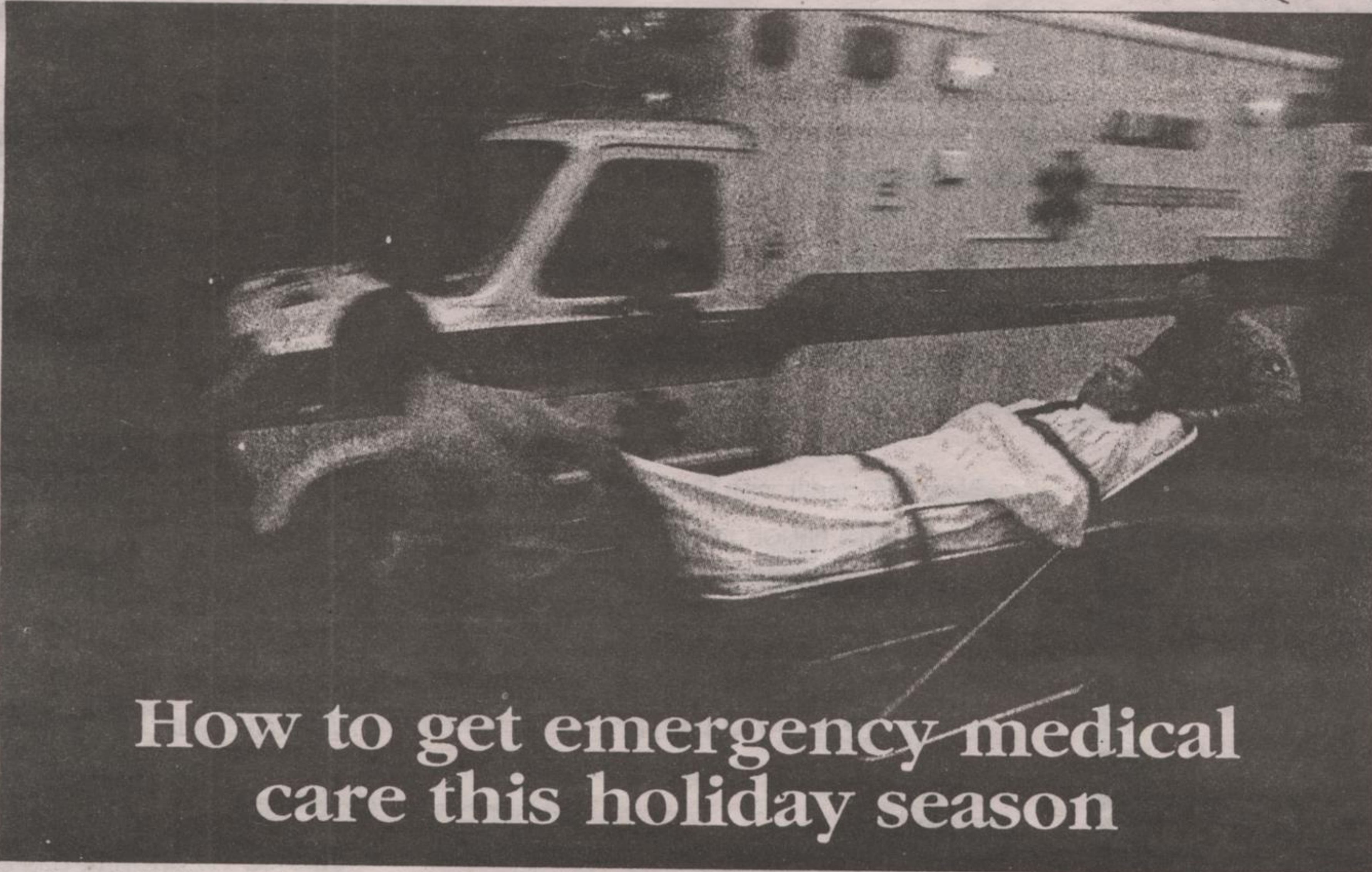


A message from your local hospital



## How to get emergency medical care this holiday season

Doctors' offices often have reduced hours during the holidays and Emergency Departments are always extra busy at this time. If you or your family need medical care, here is some advice that may help.

### Know when it's an Emergency

*Sometimes it is difficult to know whether your problem is serious or not. Here are **\*just a few examples of when you require emergency medical care - and you should call 911 or go to an Emergency Department.***

- When you are experiencing pains or tightness in the chest
- When you have severe pain
- When you have shortness of breath
- When a person is choking or having difficulty breathing
- When you think you may have fractured or broken a bone, or have a wound that may need stitches
- When you have sudden, severe headaches, vision problems, sudden weakness, numbness and/or tingling in the face, arm or leg, trouble speaking, or dizziness
- If your child has diarrhea and vomiting and won't eat or drink
- When a baby under six months has a fever over 38.5°C or 101°F

**\*If you have any doubts, call 911.**

**The ambulance will take you to the appropriate Emergency Department.**

### Please be Patient

*If you do need to go to an Emergency Department over the holiday season, please be prepared to wait. The staff will do their best to see you as quickly as possible, but the department may be very busy. Patients are seen by a doctor in order of their need, not their time of arrival. Please remember to bring your Ontario Health Insurance card and a list of any medications that you are taking.*

### Be Prepared for the Holidays

*You can often avoid problems by simply being prepared. Here is a checklist to consider:*

- **Call your doctor's office and your local pharmacy:** find out what their hours will be over the holidays and ask about any back-up coverage arrangements.
- **Get a flu shot:** Your family doctor can offer this service or refer you to the nearest clinic that does.
- **Medications and Medical equipment:** Make sure that everyone in your family has enough of their medications, both prescription and non-prescription, to last over the holiday season. Don't forget needles, alcohol swabs, etc. Also check out inhalers, respirators, oxygen, and glucose testing machines.
- **Batteries:** Have extra batteries on hand for equipment such as electric wheelchairs.
- **Medical Checkups:** If you're due for a checkup or tests, try to schedule them before the holidays.
- **Update all emergency telephone numbers** and post them in a visible place (eg. your refrigerator).
- **Remind visiting family members and friends** to bring their health card, or health insurance information.
- **Make a note of The Hospital for Sick Children's Medical Information Line, (416) 813-5817,** for any questions about your child's health.

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Have a safe and healthy holiday...