

27 August 2018

Save emergency departments for emergencies only

Waitemata District Health Board is seeking the support of the public to avoid hospital emergency departments unless in genuine need of emergency healthcare.

Waitakere and North Shore hospitals have seen record demand for care over recent days as the winter season takes full effect, with 2600 people presenting at EDs last week compared with 2450 at the same time last year, adding 150 patients to what was already a very busy period.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Andrew Brant says heavy demand for inpatient hospital care makes it all the more important that hospital resources are prioritised toward those in greatest need.

“Please help us to care for those who need it most by only coming to our EDs if you have an emergency,” Dr Brant said.

“The first point of care for non-urgent care is your family doctor or local pharmacy. Getting in quickly to be seen by your family doctor or discussing with your local pharmacist can prevent illnesses from escalating.

“If it is after-hours or you cannot get in to see your family doctor, the next option should be the nearest accident and medical clinic.

“The emergency department is only for those who are seriously unwell and in need of emergency care. Following this guide will relieve pressure on our hospitals to care for those in need of specialist care.”

Despite the heavy winter workload, Dr Brant said people who need hospital care will still receive it.

He also encouraged those who have not yet had their annual influenza immunisation to take action.

“The flu season has arrived later than expected this year but we are now seeing flu-related presentations. It is not too late to vaccinate and we strongly encourage people to do so via their family doctor,” he said.

Ends.

For further information, contact:

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