

Flu Surge Impacting Medical Service and Telephone Wait Times.

This year's flu season has impacted Northern California harder than anticipated by the health community. Some emergency rooms, medical offices, and hospitals are experiencing overcrowding and long wait times – not just at Kaiser Permanente, but throughout Northern California.

We are making every effort to staff up to maximum capacity for in-person and phone visits. And, we are reaching out to remind members that there are several ways to receive care.

Here are some tips we'd like to share:

Understanding the Flu

People often use “flu” to describe a mild cold or illness, but there's nothing mild about the flu. You can go to kp.org/flu to view a list of frequently asked flu questions, health guidelines, and symptoms.

Accessing Care

As always, if you feel that you are having a medical emergency, you should call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. However, if you are experiencing general flu-like symptoms you can:

- **Call for a telehealth appointment.** A doctor can call back, often within an hour, to discuss symptoms and, if needed, provide a prescription right over the phone that can be picked up from any Kaiser Permanente pharmacy.
- **Go online to kp.org** to schedule a non-urgent appointment with your primary doctor. You may be able to schedule a same-day appointment, especially if you are willing to be seen by another doctor or nurse practitioner.

Visiting Urgent Care

Should you feel that your symptoms are more severe, you should go to Urgent Care, though please understand that due to the current flu season you may experience a significantly long wait time.

Getting a Flu Shot

It's not too late to get vaccinated. It is still the safest and most effective way to protect against the flu, and symptoms are likely to be less severe if you do get sick. Visit business.kaiserpermanente.org for [tips and tools](#) you can use to keep you informed about the flu.