

# Childhood immunization awareness and beliefs

## Health indicator report

### Background

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- The purpose of this health indicator report is to provide information about childhood immunization awareness and beliefs among parents of children aged 4-17 living in Halton Region.
- Infectious diseases are commonly spread among children who are not immunized. Immunizations are a safe way to protect children, and the community around them, from infectious disease.<sup>1</sup>
- Ontario's *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) requires that children and adolescents attending primary or secondary school be immunized against designated diseases unless they have a valid exemption. Under the ISPA, students who do not have their required immunization records or a valid exemption provided to the Health Department may be suspended from school by an order from the local Medical Officer of Health.<sup>2</sup> Parents and guardians are responsible for reporting every vaccine administered to each school-aged child to their local health unit.<sup>2</sup>
- This health indicator report uses data from the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS).

### Key findings

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- In 2017, among Halton parents:
  - 99% were aware that up-to-date immunizations for certain diseases are required by law for all children attending school in Ontario, unless a signed exemption form is provided for the child.
  - 88% were aware that a child could be suspended from school if the local public health unit is not provided with up-to-date immunization information or a signed exemption form for that child.
- 86% of Halton parents strongly agreed and 14%\* somewhat agreed that by immunizing children we are protecting them from disease.
- 64% of Halton parents strongly agreed and 33% somewhat agreed that vaccines are safe for children to have.



# Awareness of childhood immunization reporting requirements

In 2017, among parents of children aged 4-17 living in Halton Region:



were aware that up-to-date immunizations for certain diseases are required by law for all children attending school in Ontario, unless a signed exemption form is provided for the child.

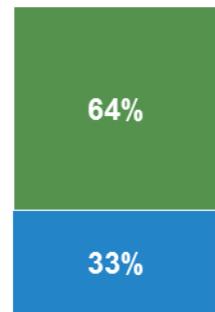


were aware that a child could be suspended from school if the local public health unit is not provided with up-to-date immunization information or a signed exemption form for that child.



# Beliefs about childhood vaccine efficacy and safety

- In 2017, 86% of Halton parents strongly agreed and 14%\* somewhat agreed that by immunizing children we are protecting them from disease.
- In 2017, 64% of Halton parents strongly agreed and 33% somewhat agreed that vaccines are safe for children to have.



By immunizing children we are protecting them from disease

Vaccines are safe for children to have

■ Somewhat agreed ■ Strongly agreed

Percentage of Halton parents with a child aged 4-17 who agreed that immunization protects from disease and that vaccines are safe for children, Halton Region, 2017

## About RRFSS

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- The Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS) is an on-going telephone survey (land line and cell phone) used to collect information on attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and awareness of issues related to health in Halton. RRFSS is conducted by the Institute of Social Research and York University.
- Each year, a random sample of approximately 1,200 adults aged 18 and over are surveyed in Halton Region.
- In 2016, RRFSS underwent changes in sampling and analysis methodology. **Therefore, it is not recommended to compare data from 2016 onwards to past years of RRFSS data.**
- For more information on RRFSS methodology, limitations and statistical terms, please see the RRFSS Data Notes and Data Interpretation Guide at [Halton.ca](http://Halton.ca)

## Data notes

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### Definitions:

**Parent** refers to a parent of a child/children aged 4 to 17 who attends school outside of the home.

**Immunization** or vaccination is a method of protecting children from infectious disease. Immunizations are also sometimes called injections or shots.

**ISPA** requirements and the immunization schedule can be found at

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/ispa.aspx>. For more information on the immunization of school children in Halton please see the [2017-18 report](#).

**Data Source:** Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System [2017], Halton Region Health Department and Institute for Social Research, York University.

Estimates marked with an asterisk (\*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.

### References

1. Halton Region Health Department. 2018. Immunization. Accessed October 2018 from [www.halton.ca/immunize](http://www.halton.ca/immunize).
2. Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. 2018. Immunization. Accessed October 2018 from <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/immunization/ispa.aspx>.

For more health indicator and health status reports, visit the Halton Health Statistics website at [halton.ca](http://halton.ca)

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