

HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
TEL: 905-825-6000 FAX: 905-825-1444

TO: Halton Physicians

Medical Chiefs of Staff: Joseph Brant Hospital, Halton Healthcare (Oakville, Milton and Georgetown Hospitals)  
Chairs of: Family Practice, Paediatrics, Internal Medicine, Emergency, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Surgery  
Chief of Laboratory Services and Infection Control Practitioners  
Halton Midwives

POST IN: Emergency Department and Physicians Lounge

FROM: Dr. Joanna Oda, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: December 17, 2019

**RE: Localized Influenza-like illness activity increasing**

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#### **QUICK FACTS**

- Influenza-like-illness (ILI) activity is increasing in Halton. While ILI activity is low in much of Ontario, Halton is seeing increased Emergency Department (ED) visits for ILI and respiratory illness.
- As of December 14, 2019 there have been 27 confirmed cases of influenza this season, 14 of which were last week (week 50, Dec 8-14).
- The first influenza outbreak in a long-term care facility was declared December 16, 2019.
- Most confirmed cases of influenza and respiratory/ILI ED visits are among children, especially those under 5 years.
- Current national surveillance suggests there is a good match between the H1N1 and Influenza B components of this year's vaccine and circulating virus. However, the majority of H3N2 samples belong to a different genetic group than the vaccine component. It is too early in the season to estimate vaccine efficacy.

#### **KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS**

- The [Winter Respiratory Testing Guidelines](#) from Public Health Ontario took effect November 4, 2019.
- Public Health Ontario provides [Guidelines for the use of antivirals](#) for suspected and confirmed influenza and the management of outbreaks.
- Continue to encourage everyone to receive influenza vaccination, especially those at high-risk for complications. For persons over 65 years old, offer either high-dose trivalent or standard-dose quadrivalent vaccine based on availability. The Health Department's stock of high-dose trivalent vaccine has been fully distributed. Additional doses are not expected.

#### **KEY MESSAGES FOR PATIENTS**

- It is more important to get vaccinated prior to influenza infection with an available vaccine than to wait for a specific vaccine (e.g. high dose).

#### **RESOURCES**

- [Sign up online](#) for Halton's Weekly Influenza Activity Report. See [Ontario's Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin](#) and [Canada's FluWatch](#) for provincial and national influenza surveillance.
- [2019-2020 Universal Influenza Immunization Program](#). Information for Health Care Professionals. Ministry of Health.

Please report all suspected or confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) (formerly Reportable Diseases) to the Halton Region Health Department as soon as possible. Diseases marked \* should be reported immediately by telephone (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or fax (Mon-Fri, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm only). Other diseases can be reported the next working day. Call 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866. For general information, please visit [halton.ca](http://halton.ca).

**If you can't access hyperlinks, please sign-up for electronic updates by emailing [doctors@halton.ca](mailto:doctors@halton.ca)**