

HALTON REGION HEALTH DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
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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

POST IN: Emergency Department and Physicians Lounge

FROM: Dr. Julie Emili, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: December 12, 2018

RE: Increasing Pediatric Influenza Activity

Halton is seeing a higher number of influenza cases among children than in past flu seasons. Approximately 1/3 of these children have been hospitalized. In the first week of December, 11 new pediatric cases (0-12 years of age) were reported in Halton. This trend is similar to that seen across Canada.

Influenza A is the most common influenza virus circulating in Canada at this time. The percentage of tests positive for influenza A is higher for this time of year compared to the same period during the previous eight seasons. The majority of these viruses are A(H1N1)pdm09. The 2018/2019 influenza vaccine which contains the A(H1N1)pdm09 strain appears to be a good match. Early indications also show some influenza B/Phuket/3073/2013-like strains circulating and this strain is also included in the 2018/2019 quadrivalent influenza vaccine (QIV).

Health care providers are encouraged to continue to promote influenza immunization for all age groups including children older than 6 months of age and pregnant woman. **Please note that there is no longer any FluMist available in Ontario.** Providers should continue to use QIV for all eligible individuals. Infants and children under 9 years of age who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time should be receiving 2 doses at least 4 weeks apart.

For weekly updates on influenza activity across Halton during influenza season, please sign up for our weekly influenza surveillance report:

<http://webaps.halton.ca/forms/mailchimp/influenza.cfm>

For more information on influenza activity across Canada, please see the FluWatch report from PHAC:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/fluwatch/2018-2019/week48-november-25-december-1-2018.html>

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.

If any link provided in this memo does not work, please cut and paste it into your web browser.