

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

POST IN: Emergency Department and Physicians Lounge

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

DATE: October 9, 2018

RE: Halton's first confirmed influenza case for the 2018-2019 influenza season

Influenza A has been confirmed in an older adult from Burlington with no recent travel history. Influenza activity is still relatively low. Three other health units in Ontario reported flu activity in week 38: Durham and Niagara health units reported sporadic activity and Peel reported localized activity.

Typically, the influenza season picks up towards the end of November, peaking late in December. In Ontario, the percent positivity for all influenza types among respiratory laboratory tests in week 38 was 0.6% (0.1% for influenza A and 0.5% for influenza B), which was similar to week 37 (0.5%).

Additional Information for Influenza Season

Halton's Weekly Influenza Activity Report (reporting begins in November)

- Sign-up to receive a weekly report of influenza activity in Halton Region.
<http://webaps.halton.ca/forms/mailchimp/influenza.cfm>

Influenza Testing

Public Health Laboratory influenza testing will affect the number of individuals tested. The summer algorithm usually remains in effect until the first Monday of November then the winter algorithm takes effect.

- http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/LAB_SD_121_Respiratory_Viral_Testing_Algorithm_and_Enhanced_Surveillance_Update.pdf

Antiviral medications for influenza

- When influenza is circulating, positive influenza tests are not needed before starting treatment for patients with:
 - severe acute respiratory illness (e.g. requiring hospitalization), or
 - high risk of influenza complications/severe disease

https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Antiviral_Medication_Influenza_Fact_sheet_2016.pdf

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. Dial 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866. For general information, please visit www.halton.ca/physicians. To sign up for important updates by email, visit www.halton.ca/physicianupdates.

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