

HALTON REGION PUBLIC HEALTH • Office of the Medical Officer of Health

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TO: Halton Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Emergency Departments, other Healthcare Providers

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

DATE: November 24, 2021

RE: Use of Antiviral Medications in Primary Healthcare Settings

QUICK FACTS

- As of November 16, 2021, four cases of influenza have been reported in Halton for the 2021-22 season.
- Antiviral treatment is most effective when administered early (within 12 hours of illness onset as a practice goal) to those with suspected or confirmed influenza.
- Antiviral medications can reduce the risk of influenza-related complications and limit symptom duration.
- When influenza is circulating, laboratory confirmation is not required to initiate antiviral treatment.

KEY MESSAGES FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- When indicated, treatment should begin as soon as possible for those with either suspected or confirmed influenza, as per [Public Health Ontario's: At A Glance Influenza Antiviral Treatment](#).
- Additional information on antiviral treatment is outlined in [Public Health Ontario's: Q&A Antiviral Medications for Seasonal Influenza: Information for Health Care Providers, 2019](#).
- A new Influenza Dashboard will be launching on halton.ca by the end of November and will be updated weekly. Please [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.
- Refer to the Ministry of Health [2021/2022 Universal Influenza Immunization Program \(UIIP\) implementation package](#) which contains information and resources for health care providers who may be providing influenza immunization.

KEY MESSAGES FOR CLIENTS

- Influenza season typically spans from late fall to early spring.
- The annual influenza vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and those around you against influenza.
- Persons 65 years and older may receive either high-dose QIV or standard-dose QIV vaccines. However, it is recommended that they receive high-dose QIV as it provides higher protection against Influenza A(H3N2), which is the predominant strain seen in this age group.
- Receive your influenza vaccine as soon as possible, as it takes about two weeks to take effect.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for the 2021/2022 Influenza Season](#)
- [Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for Individuals 6 months to 64 years of age](#)
- [Health Care Provider Qs & As: Information for Individuals ≥65 years of age](#)

Please report all suspected/confirmed cases of [Diseases of Public Health Significance](#) to Public Health immediately by calling 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866.

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY TO ALL PHYSICIANS IN YOUR OFFICE AND/OR POST IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS AND PHYSICIAN LOUNGES. IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH THIS ATTACHMENT, PLEASE EMAIL DOCTORS@HALTON.CA.