

Health **FAX**

Influenza A activity high and expected to peak in last week of December. Vaccine continues to be an excellent match.

Attention: **Physicians, Long-Term Care Homes, Rest and Retirement Homes, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Neighbouring Health Units, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies**

Date: December 14, 2012

Simcoe County and District of Muskoka

There have been five lab-confirmed influenza A institutional outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka since December 2, 2012. In addition to the 12 outbreak-related cases, there have been 26 sporadic lab-confirmed cases reported as of December 12, 2012. All are influenza A and the specimens sent for further subtyping have all been H3.

Ontario

There have been approximately 380 lab-confirmed influenza cases and 35 influenza outbreaks reported in Ontario as of December 1, 2012. The vast majority of cases (98.0%) are influenza A. The dominant subtype is H3N2, which represents 97% of all subtyped influenza A cases. **Influenza activity is currently high in Simcoe-Muskoka with around 26% of all influenza swabs testing positive from December 2 to 8.** This increased from 2.4% the previous week.

Healthcare providers are encouraged to continue offering influenza vaccinations, as the first wave of influenza is likely to peak in our area around the last week of December. The vaccine continues to be an excellent match to the prevailing H3N2 strain. In addition, a wave of influenza B often occurs later in the season.

Prescribers may experience an increase in persons requesting Tamiflu prophylaxis. For any unimmunized staff working in institutions experiencing confirmed influenza outbreaks, Tamiflu prophylaxis at 75mg once daily until the outbreak is over is recommended and required as per Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care protocols. Canadian guidelines on the use of antiviral drugs for influenza are available at <http://www.ammi.ca/guidelines>.

All lab-confirmed influenza cases and institutional respiratory outbreaks are reportable to public health to ensure timely follow-up. For additional information or to report influenza cases and respiratory outbreaks please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Communicable Disease Team at (705) 721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 extension 8809.

Additional Information on Influenza

1. Public Health Ontario now issues the Ontario Influenza Bulletin which can be accessed at: <http://www.oahpp.ca/resources/flubulletin.html>
2. NACI Statement on Influenza Vaccination for the 2012-2013 season can be accessed at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/12vol38/acs-dcc-4/index-eng.php>
3. Public Health Agency of Canada, Issues of FluWatch can be accessed at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index-eng.php>
4. The Use of Antiviral Drugs for Influenza: Guidance for Practitioners, 2012-2013 by the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada (AMMI) can be accessed at <http://www.ammi.ca/guidelines>