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Respiratory Season Update, Introducing the *New* Weekly Respiratory Virus Update & Infectious Disease Epidemiology Refreshed on HealthSTATS

Attention: Physicians, Hospitals, CNE, ER Manager, ER Physician, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Community Health Centres, Walk-In Urgent Care Clinic, Nurse Practitioner, Ontario Health, Ontario Health Teams, Midwives, Family Health Team, Indigenous Healthcare & Community, Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Neighbouring Health Units, Paramedic Services, Corrections

Date: October 3, 2024

As of October 1, 2024, three laboratory-confirmed influenza cases have been reported to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) for the 2024-2025 season meaning, the influenza season has not started in earnest. We expect to see an increase in cases in late October/early November. The percent positivity for our region remains low at 0% and the province at 0.3%.

As of September 21, 2024, 19 of 34 health units have reported at least one case of influenza for the season. SMDHU will continue to analyze surveillance data and provide updates as necessary.

As public health units prepare for the Fall/Winter 2024-25 respiratory season, SMDHU has undertaken planning to support the health system's readiness to respond to seasonal surges of respiratory viruses. Please review the recent [Public Health Alerts](#) related to SMDHU's vaccination campaigns this fall.

Weekly Respiratory Virus Update:

Simcoe Muskoka's Weekly Respiratory Virus Update (WRVU) is now live on our website:

<https://smdhu.org/wrvu> .

Over the summer months, the WRVU was redeveloped for the 2024-25 respiratory season into an interactive report, replacing the previous Weekly Respiratory Virus Update PDF and the Community Risk Level tool. The new report summarizes and assesses current data, providing an overall activity level and week-over-week comparison for COVID-19, Influenza and RSV (where data is available). Indicators include percent positivity, institutional outbreaks, cases (trend data only), hospitalizations and ED visits. Due to changes at the provincial level, wastewater surveillance is no longer being conducted in Simcoe Muskoka.

The tool will be updated each Wednesday, with an email notification sent out at the same time.

HealthSTATS Update:

View all Public Health Alert bulletins at the Health Professionals Portal

www.smdhu.org/HPPortal



Subscribe to urgent health email communications (E.g., Public Health Alert) by registering at www.smdhu.org/PHAlert

Simcoe Muskoka's [HealthSTATS Infectious Disease dashboard](#) has been updated with 2023 data for both Simcoe Muskoka and Ontario. We continue to see a rebound in diseases of public health significance following the COVID-19 pandemic:

- **Syphilis** (all types) is on the rise, locally and provincially
 - In Simcoe Muskoka, there has been a more than 400% increase since 2018
 - Changing demographic:
 - Women make up nearly 40% of cases in 2023, a significant rise from pre-pandemic (5% cases were female in 2018)
 - While the MSM population is still disproportionately represented (25% of cases in 2023), cases in women and heterosexual men are increasing
- **Chlamydia** and **Gonorrhoea** case counts have both rebounded to pre-pandemic levels.
 - New testing and treatment guidelines are [available](#)
- Cases of **Lyme Disease** continue to increase in Simcoe Muskoka, with 30 cases reported in 2023 – the highest number ever recorded locally.
 - Use [Ontario Health Lyme Guidance document](#) for clinical management
 - Three additional tick-borne illnesses were added as reportable in 2023: Babesiosis, Anaplasmosis and Powassan virus
- **Active Tuberculosis** cases have increased locally when compared to pre-pandemic – 10 cases in 2023.
- Over 100 **invasive Group A Streptococcal** infections were reported in 2023 - nearly double the number reported in 2018
- Enteric illnesses, such as **Campylobacter Enteritis**, **Salmonellosis** and **Shigellosis**, have rebounded to, or surpassed pre-pandemic levels

For infectious disease statistics in Simcoe Muskoka and Ontario, please visit [HealthSTATS](#). For more information and resources on infectious diseases, please go to our [Health Professionals Portal](#)