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Respiratory Season Update: Weekly Respiratory Virus Updates & HealthSTATS Infectious Disease 2024 Summary

Attention: Physicians, Hospitals, Chief Nursing Executives, ER Managers, ER Physicians, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Community Health Centres, Walk-In Urgent Care Clinics, Nurse Practitioners, Ontario Health, Ontario Health Teams, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Indigenous Healthcare & Community, Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Neighbouring Health Units, Paramedic Services, Corrections

Date: October 7, 2025

As of October 4, 2025, 9 laboratory-confirmed influenza cases have been reported to the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) for the 2025-2026 season which means the influenza season has not started in earnest. We expect to see an increase in cases in late October/early November. The percentage positive for influenza in our region remains low at 0.4% and the province at 0.3%.

As of September 27, 2025, 18 of 29 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 2025-26 respiratory season, SMDHU has initiated planning efforts to support the health system's readiness for potential surges in respiratory virus activity. Please review the recent [Public Health Alerts](#) related to the 2025-26 COVID-19 Vaccine Program and the Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP).

Weekly Respiratory Virus Update:

Simcoe Muskoka's Weekly Respiratory Virus Update (WRVU) is now live on our website at: <http://smdhu.org/WRVU>

Over the summer months, an evaluation of the WRVU was undertaken and the results were used to refresh the tool for the 2025-2026 respiratory season. It 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.

The tool will be updated each Tuesday by noon, with an email notification sent out on Tuesday afternoons.

View all current Public Health Alerts by visiting the Health Professional Resources page at: <http://www.smdhu.org/PHA>

Receive urgent public health updates by email (such as Public Health Alert) by subscribing at: www.smdhu.org/PHAlert

HealthSTATS Update:

Simcoe Muskoka's [HealthSTATS Infectious Disease dashboard](#) has been updated with 2024 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) remain elevated, locally and provincially
 - In Simcoe Muskoka, there has been a more than 200% increase since 2019
 - Changing demographic:
 - Women make up 30% of cases in 2024, a significant rise from pre-pandemic (5% cases were female in 2018).
 - While men who have sex with men (MSM) population is still disproportionately represented (25% of cases in 2024), cases in women and heterosexual men are increasing.
 - One case of congenital Syphilis was reported locally in 2024.
- **Gonorrhea** counts remain above 200 annually in Simcoe Muskoka.
 - New testing and treatment guidelines are available [here](#).
- Cases of **Lyme Disease** continue to increase in Simcoe Muskoka, with 47 cases reported in 2024 which is the highest number ever recorded locally and a 50% increase from 2023.
 - Use [Ontario Health Lyme Guidance document](#) for clinical management.
 - One local case of each of Anaplasmosis and Powassan virus were also reported in 2024.
- **Active Tuberculosis** cases continue to increase locally when compared to pre-pandemic with 16 cases in 2024.
- Waterborne illnesses, such as **Cyclosporiasis**, **Cryptosporidiosis** and **Giardiasis** have rebounded to or surpassed pre-pandemic levels.
- **Pertussis** case counts in 2024 were the highest recorded locally with 64 cases. Provincial cases were also elevated, exhibiting an incidence similar to what was observed in 2006.
- One case of **Tetanus** was reported locally in 2024 – the first case reported in over 10 years.

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](#).