

2021-2022 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status March 30th, 2022

Overall Assessment

The current level of influenza activity in London and Middlesex County continues to be low. Other regions of Ontario have reported sporadic influenza activity, with both influenza A and influenza B cases being identified. To date, there has been a total of 129 confirmed influenza cases reported in Ontario (121 influenza A, eight influenza B).

Analysis and Action

Even though Ontario is well into this year's influenza season, we continue to encourage London and Middlesex County residents to get their seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as they can.

Regardless of the level of local influenza activity, there are a number of easy-to-follow steps residents can take to avoid becoming sick throughout the year. Washing your hands frequently with soap and warm water for 15-20 seconds or using a waterless hand sanitizer (with at least 70 percent alcohol content), remains an effective way to prevent many illnesses, including influenza. As the pandemic continues, local residents are also advised to continue following these COVID-19 prevention practices:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow,
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth,
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as doorknobs, frequently,
- Stay home when feeling sick, and
- Even with the lifting of Ontario's masking requirement, the Health Unit continues to recommend wearing a mask in enclosed public places where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Where possible, the Health Unit also recommends maintaining a physical distance of at least two metres (six feet) from people who are not part of your household.

Details of Current Local Activity

Between March 20th and March 26th, there were no laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza A or influenza B reported to the Middlesex-London Health Unit. A total of seven influenza A cases has been reported since surveillance began on August 29th, 2021.

Appendix A provides more detail about laboratory-based influenza activity indicators for the current reporting week, as well as other local indicators of respiratory illness.

Provincial and National Comparison

In this week's *Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin*, Public Health Ontario reports that influenza activity in health units across the province was similar to the previous week. In the most recent week, 21 confirmed influenza A cases were reported in Ontario. This is the highest weekly number of cases reported since surveillance began on August 29th, 2021.

In this week's *FluWatch*, the Public Health Agency of Canada reports activity across the country has increased in recent weeks but remains low for this time of year. Low numbers of sporadic local influenza cases continue to be reported with no evidence of community circulation.

- The latest *Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin*, issued by Public Health Ontario (PHO), is available at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/commonly-used-products/respiratory-pathogens-weekly>
- The latest *FluWatch* report, issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/influenza-surveillance/weekly-influenza-reports.html>

Appendix A

Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators for Middlesex-London March 20th and March 26th, 2022

Table 1: Summary of laboratory-based influenza activity indicators, Middlesex-London and Ontario, 2021-2022 influenza surveillance season

Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Number Reported: <i>Year to Date</i> <i>(from August 29, 2021)</i>	Recent Trends
Laboratory-confirmed cases ^{1, 4}	Mar. 20 - 26 (week 12) ²	Influenza A – 0 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A – 7 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A: Same as the previous week (Mar. 13 - 19) when no cases were reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (Mar. 13 - 19) when no cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types ¹	Mar. 20 - 26	Influenza A (H3) – 0 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 0 cases	Influenza A (H3) – 3 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 4 cases	N/A
Hospitalizations ^{1, 5}	Mar. 20 - 26	0	0	Same as the previous week (Mar. 13 - 19) when no hospitalizations were reported.
Deaths ^{1, 5}	Mar. 20 - 26	0	0	Same as the previous week (Mar. 13 - 19) when no deaths were reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Mar. 20 - 26	Influenza A – 0 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 0 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks	No local institutional influenza outbreaks declared to date.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario) ³	Mar. 13 - 19 (week 11) ²	Influenza A – 0.2% positivity Influenza B – 0% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Same as 0.2% positivity reported the previous week (Mar. 6 - 12). Influenza B: Same as 0% positivity reported the previous week (Mar. 6 - 12).

Notes:

1 Numbers are subject to change week by week due to the retrospective nature of reporting.

2 Weekly influenza monitoring often uses numbered weeks from 1 to 52 weeks per year. A reference week calendar can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/influenza-surveillance/fluwatch-weeks-calendar.html>

3 Public Health Ontario, [Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin](#) 2021-2022. Numbers reported represent results submitted to CIRID from 17 participating labs in Ontario and does not include all testing laboratories, [ORPB Interactive Website Data Caveats and Glossary](#)

4 The week cases are reported to the Health Unit may not be the same as week of illness onset.

5 The week hospitalizations and deaths are reported to the Health Unit may not be the same as the week in which they occurred, or the same as the week of illness onset.

Table 2: Summary of community-based respiratory illness indicators, Middlesex-London, 2021-2022 influenza surveillance season

Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Recent Trends
Middlesex-London hospital emergency department visits - percentage of patients with respiratory or fever symptoms¹	Mar. 20 - 26	An average of 6.6% of patients presented with respiratory symptoms. An average of 3.1% of patients presented with influenza-like illness (fever) symptoms.	Similar to 6.2% reported the previous week (Mar. 13 - 19). Slightly Higher than 2.5% reported the previous week (Mar. 13 - 19).
Real-time Viral Respiratory Surveillance² - Middlesex-London	Mar. 20 - 26	Activity/Risk Level: Low or Green (No significant impacts).	Same level, Low (or Green) as reported the previous week (Mar. 13 - 19).

¹ [Acute Care Enhanced Surveillance](#) (ACES) Application is a real-time syndromic surveillance system. This source will be influenced by COVID-19 activity.

² [Viral Respiratory Mapper](#) uses data from ACES (above). Activity/Risk Levels range from Green, Yellow, Orange and Red.

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