

2021-2022 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status January 12th, 2022

Overall Assessment

The current level of influenza activity in London and Middlesex County continues to be low. Other regions of Ontario are continuing to report sporadic influenza activity, with both influenza A and influenza B cases being reported. To date, there has been a total of 65 confirmed influenza cases reported in Ontario (59 influenza A, six influenza B).

Analysis and Action

The influenza season has begun in Ontario. Local residents are encouraged to get their seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as possible.

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. Local residents should also continue to follow these recommended 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,
- Maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from anyone you do not live with, and
- Wear a mask in enclosed places, or where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Details of Current Local Activity

Between January 2nd and 8th, there was one laboratory-confirmed case of influenza A reported to the Middlesex-London Health Unit, bringing the season total to seven influenza A cases.

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 is low and activity is similar to what was observed the previous week. In the most recent week, a total of five confirmed influenza cases were reported (all influenza A) in Ontario.

In this week's *FluWatch*, the Public Health Agency of Canada reports low influenza activity across Canada with no evidence of community circulation of influenza.

- 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 January 2nd and 8th, 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}	Jan. 2-8 (week 1) ²	Influenza A – 1 case Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A – 7 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A: Higher than the previous week (Dec. 26-Jan. 1) when no cases were reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (Dec. 26-Jan. 1) when no cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types ¹	Jan. 2-8	Influenza A (H3) – 0 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 1 case	Influenza A (H3) – 3 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 4 cases	N/A
Hospitalizations ^{1, 5}	Jan. 2-8	0	0	Same as the previous week (Dec. 26-Jan. 1) when no hospitalizations were reported.
Deaths ^{1, 5}	Jan. 2-8	0	0	Same as the previous week (Dec. 26-Jan. 1) when no hospitalizations were reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Jan. 2-8	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	Dec. 26-Jan. 1 (week 52) ²	Influenza A – 0.2% positivity Influenza B – 0% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Similar to 0.1% positivity reported the previous week (Dec. 19-25). Influenza B: Same as 0% positivity reported the previous week (Dec. 19-25).

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	Jan. 2-8	An average of 9.3% of patients presented with respiratory symptoms. An average of 2.8% of patients presented with influenza-like illness (fever) symptoms.	Lower than 12.4% reported the previous week (Dec. 26-Jan. 1). Slightly lower than 3.7% reported the previous week (Dec. 26-Jan. 1).
Real-time Viral Respiratory Surveillance² - Middlesex-London	Jan. 2-8	Activity/Risk Level: Moderate or Yellow (Limited but increasing impacts on the health system; increased Emergency Department Visits).	Lower than Elevated (or Orange) as reported the previous week (Dec. 26-Jan. 1).

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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