

2021-2022 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status December 15th, 2021

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 29 confirmed influenza cases reported in Ontario (25 influenza A, four 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, well in advance of peak influenza activity.

Regardless of the level of local influenza activity, there are a number of easy-to-follow steps local 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 December 5th and 11th, there was one laboratory-confirmed case of influenza A reported to the Middlesex-London Health Unit, bringing the season total to two 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 six 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 just 20% of regions reporting influenza activity. Despite high levels of influenza testing in Canada, positive laboratory tests for influenza remain at low levels.

- 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>

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Appendix A

Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators for Middlesex-London December 5th and December 11th, 2021

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}	Dec. 5-11 (week 49) ²	Influenza A – 1 case Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A – 2 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A: Same as the previous week (Nov. 28-Dec. 4) when one case was reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (Nov. 28-Dec. 4) when no cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types ¹	Dec. 5-11	0	0	Cases have not been sub-typed.
Hospitalizations ^{1,5}	Dec. 5-11	0	0	No local cases reported to date.
Deaths ^{1,5}	Dec. 5-11	0	0	No local cases reported to date.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Dec. 5-11	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	Nov. 28-Dec. 4 (week 48) ²	Influenza A – 0.2% positivity Influenza B – 0% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Similar to 0.3% positivity reported the previous week (Nov. 21-27). Influenza B: Same as 0% positivity reported the previous week (Nov. 21-27).

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	Dec. 5-11	<p>An average of 11.5% of patients presented with respiratory symptoms.</p> <p>An average of 2.6% of patients presented with influenza-like illness (fever) symptoms.</p>	<p>Similar to 11.4% reported the previous week (Nov. 28-Dec. 4).</p> <p>Similar to 2.5% reported the previous week (Nov. 28-Dec. 4).</p>
Real-time Viral Respiratory Surveillance² - Middlesex-London	Dec. 5-11	Activity/Risk Level: Moderate or Yellow (Limited but increasing impacts on the health system; increased Emergency Department Visits).	Same as the previous week (Nov. 28-Dec. 4).

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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