

2021-2022 Community Influenza Surveillance Report Update of Current Status June 1st, 2022

Overall Assessment

Influenza activity continues in London and Middlesex County. Although the activity remains low, it is slightly above what has come to be expected for this time of year during a typical influenza season. More than three quarters (79%) of public health units in Ontario continue to report localized or sporadic influenza activity. So far this season, there have been 1165 confirmed influenza cases reported in Ontario (1154 influenza A, 11 influenza B).

Analysis and Action

Even though Ontario is well into this year's influenza season, the Health Unit continues 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, handrails, countertops, etc. frequently,
- Stay home when feeling sick, and
- Continue to wear a mask in enclosed public places where physical distancing cannot be maintained, as recommended by the Health Unit. 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 May 22nd and May 28th, there were four laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza A and no cases of influenza B reported to the MLHU. This brings the total number of influenza A cases reported to the Health Unit since surveillance began on August 29th, 2021, to 42.

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, 217 confirmed cases of influenza A and two confirmed cases of influenza B were reported in Ontario. This is higher than the 162 cases of influenza A reported across Ontario in the previous week.

In this week's *FluWatch* and *Respiratory Virus Report*, the Public Health Agency of Canada noted that influenza A activity has declined slightly from the previous week and remains above typical seasonal thresholds. When compared to other respiratory viruses tested, influenza A cases decreased slightly but remains above expected levels for this time of year.

- 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>
- The latest *Respiratory Virus Report* issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/surveillance/respiratory-virus-detections-canada.html>

Appendix A

Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators for Middlesex-London May 22nd to May 28th, 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}	May 22-28 (week 21) ²	Influenza A – 4 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A – 42 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A: Lower than the previous week (May 15-21) when five cases were reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (May 15-21) when no cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types ¹	May 22-28	Influenza A (H3) – 2 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 2 cases	Influenza A (H3) – 6 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 31 cases	N/A
Hospitalizations ^{1, 5}	May 22-28	0	14	Lower than the previous week (May 15-21) when one hospitalization was reported.
Deaths ^{1, 5}	May 22-28	0	0	Same as the previous week (May 15-21) when no deaths were reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	May 22-28	Influenza A – 0 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 1 outbreak Influenza B – 0 outbreaks	Same as the previous week (May 15-21) when no outbreaks were reported.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario) ³	May 15-21 (week 20) ²	Influenza A – 6.2% positivity Influenza B – 0% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Slightly Lower than 6.9% positivity reported the previous week (May 8-14). Influenza B: Same as 0% positivity reported the previous week (May 8-14).

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	May 22-28	An average of 12.4% of patients presented with respiratory symptoms. An average of 4.2% of patients presented with influenza-like illness (fever) symptoms.	Higher than 10.6% reported the previous week (May 15-21). Similar to 4.1% reported the previous week (May 15-21).
Real-time Viral Respiratory Surveillance² - Middlesex-London	May 22-28	Activity/Risk Level: Elevated or Orange (Impacts are likely being felt across many sectors of the health system).	Higher than level (Moderate or Yellow) reported the previous week (May 15-21).

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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