

Influenza A (H3) Outbreak in a Long-Term Care Home

Toronto Public Health (TPH) is investigating a laboratory confirmed influenza A (H3) outbreak in a long-term care home. Fifteen of 215 residents and 1 of 250 staff have influenza-like symptoms. So far, 2 of the 6 nasopharyngeal swabs have tested positive for flu A (H3). Two cases have been admitted to hospital. The Ontario Government Pharmaceutical and Medical Supply Services (OGPMSS) is sending an early shipment of influenza vaccine to the facility today for residents and staff. TPH has recommended oseltamivir prophylaxis for well staff and residents, and oseltamivir treatment for those with influenza-like symptoms.

If you are seeing patients with influenza-like illness, we recommend that you acquire a nasopharyngeal sample (in viral transport medium) and send it to your laboratory for influenza testing. Patients with influenza-like illness should be advised to stay home from work or school while ill, and to practice frequent hand hygiene and cough etiquette.

The trivalent influenza vaccine for the 2010-2011 season contains A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)-like virus (the pandemic H1N1 strain), A/Perth/16/2009 (H3N2)-like virus and B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus.

All individuals aged 6 months or older who live, work or attend school in Ontario, and have no contraindications, regardless of whether or not they are considered to be at high risk or healthy, are encouraged to receive the publicly funded vaccine. In addition to the usual priority groups, for the 2010-2011 season the National Advisory Committee on Immunization has recommended three additional priority recipients for influenza vaccine: persons with morbid obesity (BMI \geq 40), Aboriginal peoples, and children 2 to 4 years of age.

The influenza vaccines are now available in Ontario and the OGPMS will be distributing the first shipment to Toronto locations the week of October 4, 2010. The second Toronto shipment will occur the week of October 18, 2010.

TPH community Flu Shot clinics, located throughout the City, will begin October 28 and operate through until December 8, 2010.

Influenza is a reportable communicable disease. Please report all suspect and confirmed cases of influenza to TPH by fax 416-392-0047, or phone 416-392-7411 (Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM) or 416-690-2142 (afterhours).