

Influenza B and Myositis in Children

During the month of March, four cases of laboratory-confirmed Influenza B complicated by myositis have been reported to Toronto Public Health (TPH) in children 5 to 14 years of age. Peel Public Health has also had ten reported cases of laboratory-confirmed Influenza B complicated by myositis in the same timeframe.

In Toronto, cases presented with complaints of leg pain, including bilateral calf pain. Other reported symptoms included fever, cough, headache, coryza and sore throat. All four cases had an elevated CK, ranging up to and above 18,000 IU/L. These children have all recovered and are doing well.

Physicians are being asked to be aware of any patients presenting with:

- acute gait abnormality;
- muscle pain;
- difficulty weight bearing; and/or
- other signs and symptoms of myositis or rhabdomyolysis, regardless of a history of respiratory illness.

Please consider possible infection with influenza virus in these patients and collect a nasopharyngeal swab if you see myositis. Consider referral to a hospital emergency room for intravenous hydration if myositis is diagnosed.

All confirmed cases of influenza are reportable to the Medical Officer of Health at TPH by calling 416-392-7411.

Influenza activity in Toronto remains below expected levels for this time of the year. This season, influenza activity peaked during the last week in December 2010 and has been decreasing steadily since then. Overall, cases of influenza subtype B have accounted for 9% of all influenza cases reported to date this season in Toronto, however, this proportion has increased in the past two months. From September 1, 2010 to January 31, 2011, 5% of all influenza cases reported in Toronto were subtype B; the proportion of subtype B cases has increased to 49% of all influenza cases reported since February 1, 2011.

Current circulating influenza strains [A (H3N2), A (H1N1) and B] show a good match to those contained in this year's vaccine.

Physicians are being asked to continue to offer the seasonal influenza vaccine in their practices.