

## 2008/09 Influenza Season

Over the last month, Toronto Public Health (TPH) has received four reports of laboratory confirmed influenza: two influenza A cases which were associated with a respiratory outbreak in a long-term care home, one influenza A case which appears to have been locally acquired, and one travel-associated influenza B case.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has advised TPH that influenza vaccine shipments are expected to be on time this year, arriving towards the end of October. TPH will be launching its "Let's Beat the Flu Campaign" on October 27, 2008 and will hold over 60 flu shot clinics across the city until early January, 2009. For a list of TPH clinics please visit <http://www.toronto.ca/health/flu>.

The WHO has recommended that the trivalent vaccine for the 2008-2009 season in the Northern Hemisphere contain an A/Brisbane/59/2007 (H1N1)-like virus, an A/Brisbane/10/2007 (H3N2)-like virus, and a B/Florida/4/2006-like virus.

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.

TPH has already received several questions about the emergence of oseltamivir resistant influenza A(H1N1) in multiple countries. During the 2007-08 influenza season, 1,281 influenza viruses from across Canada were antigenically characterized by the National Microbiology Laboratory: 36% A(H1N1), 17% A(H3N2), and 47% B viruses. Twenty-six percent of the A(H1N1) that were tested were found to be oseltamivir resistant, while 99.5% of the A(H3N2) that were tested were found to be amantadine resistant. On the basis of the resistance patterns observed, the Public Health Agency of Canada continues to recommend against the use of amantadine for the treatment and prevention of influenza, and will continue to monitor influenza resistance patterns.

Influenza is a reportable communicable disease. Please report all suspect and confirmed cases of influenza to TPH - Monday to Friday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM - by calling 416-392-7411.