

2023-2024 Respiratory Season Update

Presented to the Board of Health

October 23, 2023

140 years of communicable disease protection

- Protecting residents from communicable diseases is a cornerstone of public health practice
- For more than 20 years, TPH has held influenza immunization clinics for Toronto residents as part of the Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP)



Flu clinic opening day, 2005, [TPH Archive](#)

Respiratory virus activity is stable, but is expected to increase

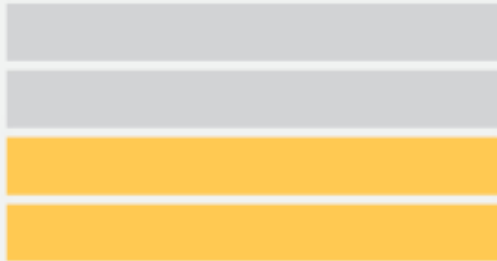
COVID-19 and influenza activity: October 8-14, 2023

Ontario

COVID-19

Percent positivity:

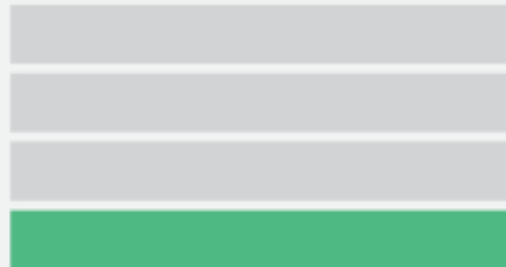
Moderate



Influenza

Percent positivity:

Low



Toronto

Overall COVID-19 Assessment



Overall Influenza Assessment



[Integrated Respiratory Diseases Dashboard – City of Toronto](#)

[Ontario Respiratory Virus Tool | Public Health Ontario](#)

Vaccines are available to protect against flu, COVID-19 and RSV

Influenza (flu)

- Pharmacies (750 offering flu, 550 COVID-19 & flu)
- Primary care providers
- TPH clinics (until end of year)
- Long-term care homes and hospitals to vaccinate staff and residents/ patients

RSV

- [RSV vaccine](#) is publicly funded for those 60 years and older living in long-term care homes, elder care lodges and some retirement homes

COVID-19

• XBB Vaccine

- Health Canada has approved Moderna and Pfizer XBB vaccines
- Now available for high-risk individuals; available to the general population beginning October 30

• Novavax COVID-19 Vaccine (original product)

- Non-mRNA COVID-19 vaccine

TPH is working across the health system to support outbreak preparedness and responses

TPH plans to support outbreak responses in long-term care, shelters and health care settings by:



Distributing outbreak preparedness tool kits, vaccines and Ministry guidance



Supporting adherence to best practices in settings like long-term care and group homes



Supporting and providing guidance for outbreak management



Providing health care professionals with information to protect themselves and their patients

Spotlight on IPAC Hubs for enhancing infection control and outbreak responses

What are IPAC Hubs?

- In Toronto, IPAC Hubs are based in hospitals and include IPAC physicians and infection control practitioners
- TPH staff and representatives from health and community care settings work collaboratively with IPAC Hubs

What do IPAC Hubs do?

- Help build knowledge and expertise
- Support the development of IPAC programs

Why are IPAC Hubs important?

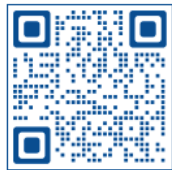
- Provide advanced IPAC and clinical advice
- Enhance system capacity to prevent infections and respond to outbreaks
- Ensure these settings can better respond to respiratory outbreaks and future infectious disease threats

Public education campaign



**Get vaccinated for both
at the same time!**

Book an appointment



tphbookings.ca

- Comprehensive, multi-channel communications strategy aligned with Ontario Ministry of Health guidance
- Mix of digital and print media, and partnerships with community and healthcare partners, to maximize reach to our diverse audiences
- Themes:
 - Vaccination
 - Protective measures
 - What to do when you're sick
 - Where to find COVID-19 rapid antigen tests near you
 - COVID-19 treatment

TPH is collaborating with health care partners to make testing and treatment more available

Testing

Increasing public access to
Rapid Antigen Tests

Communicating testing
recommendations

Therapeutics

Promoting and amplifying messaging on
eligibility and access to drugs for
COVID-19 and Influenza

- **Indigenous Strategy**

- TPH is committed to ongoing partnership and collaboration with Indigenous service providers to address population health priorities, as identified by the Indigenous community.
- TPH has been working with local Indigenous organizations to prepare for the fall respiratory season including information sharing and creating temporary influenza or COVID-19 vaccination clinics in partnership with Indigenous organizations.

- **Accessibility**

- Ensuring information about vaccination, testing, treatment, are accessible to all
- Ensuring TPH fixed-site vaccination clinics and mobile vaccine clinics are accessible, with accommodations available upon request.
- Mobile clinics will focus on neighbourhoods and communities that need it the most, those who are highest risk and those who have been most challenged to access the vaccines in the past

Programs include:

- Actions families can take to reduce respiratory virus spread like:
 - Getting vaccinated
 - Using masks in crowded indoor settings with poor ventilation
 - Staying home if you have symptoms
- Webinars by TPH Associate Medical Officers of Health and Public Health Nurses for school communities
- Curriculum resources and online supports

The Medical Officer of Health Recommends that:

1. The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to monitor the impacts of the respiratory season on Toronto residents and report back to the Board of Health in January with a situational update, if necessary.
2. The Board of Health request the Ministry of Health to provide \$5.1 million in annual funding for Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) hubs to prevent and mitigate the impacts of outbreaks, particularly in long-term care and retirement homes, and other congregate settings such as shelters and group homes.

Thank you

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