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Re: Toronto Public Health Back-to-School Information

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As you prepare your child for a healthy and successful 2024-2025 school year, here is some important information from Toronto Public Health (TPH) to help support you.

Reducing the Spread of Communicable Diseases

To help protect our school communities, staff, students, and visitors are reminded to:

- Stay home if they are sick or have symptoms of illness.
- [Wash or sanitize their hands](#) often.
- [Cover their cough or sneeze with their elbow or a tissue](#).
- Stay up to date on vaccinations:
 - Your child needs to be up to date with vaccinations, as outlined in Ontario's [Immunization of School Pupils Act \(ISPA\)](#), or have a valid exemption.
 - This includes vaccinations for measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis (whooping cough), meningococcal and varicella (chicken pox).
 - Toronto is seeing an increase in [pertussis \(whooping cough\)](#), similar to what is being reported across Ontario and Canada. Infection from this vaccine preventable disease starts like a common cold, with mild fever, runny nose, red watery eyes and a mild cough. It can then turn into coughing fits that last weeks or even months.
 - Vaccines are available through your primary care provider or at a [TPH vaccination clinic](#). Appointments can be made at [tphbookings.ca](#).
 - Vaccinations need to be reported to TPH using [Immunization Connect Ontario \(ICON\)](#).
 - Students in grade 7 and 8 will be offered the hepatitis B, human papillomavirus (HPV) and meningococcal vaccines in school through TPH's [School Immunization Program \(SIP\)](#).
 - Students in grades 9 to 12 who have missed these vaccines can still get them for free at a [TPH vaccination clinic](#).
 - Updated COVID-19 and influenza (flu) vaccines will be available this fall.
 - Both vaccines will be important to prevent serious illness from these viruses during peak [respiratory illness season](#).

Dental Screening Program

TPH's [Dental & Oral Health Services](#) staff will be conducting dental screening in elementary schools. For children with identified dental care needs, TPH will assist families with finding a dental provider and will provide information about good oral health habits.

Heat Safety Tips

Hot weather can put your child's health at risk. Infants and young children are at greater risk for heat related illnesses. Some tips to beat the heat when outside include:

- Drink plenty of water, even before you feel thirsty.
- Wear loose, light-coloured, breathable clothing and when outdoors wear a wide-brimmed hat.
- Avoid the sun and stay in the shade or use an umbrella.
- Reschedule or plan outdoor exercise (e.g., run, walk, bike) during the cooler parts of the day (morning or evening).

Spending time in a cool space can help protect against the effects of hot weather. To find a place to stay cool, visit toronto.ca/KeepCool. Visit the [Staying Healthy in Hot Weather](#) webpage for more information.

School Health Services

TPH's team of health professionals work to serve school communities using the Healthy Schools approach, based on the Ontario Ministry of Education's [Foundations for a Healthy School](#). Our School Liaison Public Health Nurses (SLPHNs) provide consultation, resources, referrals and other supports to Toronto schools.

More Information

Stay tuned for more information via your child's school principal or visit toronto.ca/health to learn more about:

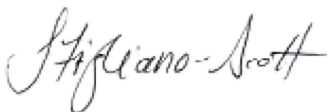
- [Healthy Schools](#)
- [Health Information for School Age Parents & Caregivers](#)
- [Immunizations](#)
- [Mental health resources](#)
- [Respiratory viruses](#)
- [Sexual health promotion resources to support parents and caregivers](#)
- [Vaping](#)

Questions?

Contact TPH at publichealth@toronto.ca or 416-338-7600, Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Service is available in multiple languages.

Wishing you and your family a happy and healthy school year ahead.

Sincerely,



Joanne Figliano-Scott
Acting Chief Nursing Officer
Acting Director of Community Health and Well-being