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Public Health Advisory

Issued December 17, 2018

First Lab-Confirmed Influenza Case Reported to Southwestern Public Health (SWPH)

Important information for health care professionals

SWPH has received notification of the first lab-confirmed case of influenza for the 2018-2019 season. This is confirmation that influenza is circulating in our community.

Vaccination: Please continue to promote influenza vaccine to your patients. You are a trusted source of vaccine information. Primary care providers are particularly influential for older adults – in improving knowledge about influenza, the vaccine, and its potential side effects.

Treatment: When influenza is circulating locally, laboratory confirmation is not needed before initiating treatment. The Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada (AMMI Canada) recommends that treatment with antivirals begin as soon as possible after symptoms occur, with better effects if started within 12 hours (versus 48 hours).

Current clinical guidelines recommend that during influenza season, antiviral therapy be started empirically for:

- patients with moderate, progressive, severe or complicated influenza, such as individuals who are hospitalized with influenza-like illness); and,
- patients at high risk of influenza complications/severe disease.

Influenza Surveillance: For more information about respiratory pathogens circulating in Ontario please consult Public Health Ontario's (PHO) [Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin \(ORPB\)](#). The ORPB is updated weekly and provides details about influenza and other respiratory viruses.

For information about local influenza activity in the SWPH region, please visit:

<https://swpublichealth.ca/your-health/infectious-diseases/influenza/flu-activity>

Contact for more information:

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