

Public Health Update from Southwestern Public Health



For Health Care Providers in Oxford County, Elgin County, and the City of St. Thomas

December 2, 2022

An Update from Dr. Ninh Tran, Medical Officer of Health at Southwestern Public Health

Public Health: What You Need to Know

MASKING

- Reminder: Southwestern Public Health **advises all healthcare providers** to consider reimplementing masking protocols in their indoor and clinical settings. **Also consider adjustments to in-person gatherings** (e.g. virtual staff meetings and holiday events).

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

- Given the sharp rise in Influenza cases, **we are urgently asking you to prioritize flu shots right now**, especially for seniors and the very young (e.g., 6 months to 4 years).
- While the supply of enhanced influenza vaccines has been depleted centrally, the Ministry continues to have a good supply of the QIV product ready to distribute. Please ensure your leaders and staff are aware of the robust QIV supply, which is accessed through routine ordering processes.

INFLUENZA ANTIVIRALS

- Effective November 30, 2022, the province began expanding access to oseltamivir for the 2022–2023 influenza season for treatment of Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) program-eligible persons who are at high risk of complications from influenza infection.
- Further details, including reimbursement criteria, are available [here](#) (see pages 8 to 10).

COVID-19 VACCINATION

- Southwestern Public Health also now offers walk-in options at its St. Thomas (1230 Talbot St.) and Woodstock (410 Buller St.) clinics. Hours are 9AM-Noon, and 1PM-4PM any day the clinics are open. Anyone aged 5 and older can receive a flu and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time at these clinics.
- Patient Resource: [COVID-19 vaccine boosters](#) (FAQ, Ministry of Health).

HIGH-RISK RSV PROPHYLAXIS PROGRAM

- Reminder: The Ministry-funded Respiratory Syncytial Virus Prophylaxis for High-Risk Infants Program covers the full cost of palivizumab drugs used to prevent serious lower respiratory tract infections caused by RSV.

Southwestern Public Health
www.swpublichealth.ca
1-800-922-0096



- This drug is only provided from November to April for infants who meet the Ministry's eligibility criteria for funding. [View the full eligibility here.](#)
- Patient Resource: [RSV funded drugs program](#) (FAQ, Ministry of Health).

CLINICAL RESOURCES FOR RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

- Ontario has launched a new [website](#) on respiratory illness that informs parents on how to manage their child's fever.
- New Virtual Care in Primary Care guidance documents can be accessed on the Ontario Health [website](#) under 'Clinical Standards and Guidelines'.
 - The virtual care guidance materials are intended to support primary care clinicians to make deliberate and purposeful decisions in the planning and delivery of virtual care.
 - This is 'phase one' of the virtual care guidance for primary care –more detailed virtual care guidance will be released in the future, including materials focused on other specialties and areas of care.
- Children's medication resources:
 - The latest [communication](#) from Health Canada authorizing foreign importation.
 - Clinical [guidance](#) has been offered by multiple associations (the one from the Canadian Paediatric Society is for patients).
 - For Healthcare Professionals: [Canadian Pharmacists Association's statement.](#)

EBOLA

- The risk to Ontario of Ebola virus disease remains low. The Ministry is working collaboratively with our federal and provincial health system partners to build on collective readiness efforts to respond if the need arises.
- Refer to the [Interim Guidance](#) document and find more information and resources on the [Ministry's webpage.](#)

INTERIM CANADA DENTAL BENEFIT

- The Government of [Canada's new interim Canada Dental Benefit](#) is available for eligible families who:
 - have children under 12
 - have an adjusted net income of less than \$90,000
 - do not have access to private dental insurance
 - have, or will have, out of pocket dental care expenses
- The benefit allows families to receive up-front, direct payments up to \$650 per year, per child, for two years (totalling up to \$1300) for dental care services. The Canada Revenue Agency will be processing the applications and payments for the benefit, and applications are accepted as of December 1, 2022.
- Download patient resources through [this link](#) (this is a dropbox for health professionals to access materials).