

Public Health Update from Southwestern Public Health

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

July 21, 2023

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

Public Health: What You Need to Know

COVID-19 BOOSTER DOSE RECOMMENDATION

- On July 7, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health issued a communication to recommend individuals consider delaying receipt of a COVID-19 booster dose until the fall to ensure the expected 6-month interval from their last dose.
- Certain individuals may continue to receive a booster dose prior to fall based on their unique health status and personal situation. [See the Ontario.ca website](#) for information to support patient discussions.
- SWPH has limited appointments this summer for individuals/children seeking primary series doses or those who elect for booster doses in consultation with their healthcare provider. Book online at [Ontario.ca/book-vaccine](#) or call the provincial booking centre at 1-833-943-3900.

NEW TICK-BORNE DISEASES

- The Ontario Ministry of health announced three new tick-borne diseases of public health significance on July 1.
- Refer to Public Health Ontario's three new webpages to support information about these: [Powassan Virus](#), [Babesiosis](#), and [Anaplasmosis](#).

DoPHS CHANGES FOR TICK-BORNE DISEASES

- Amendments to the Ontario Regulation to include anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Powassan virus as Diseases of Public Health Significance (DoPHS) have been approved.
- The updated HPPA and its regulations, including Regulation 569 (Reporting) and Regulation 135/18 (Designation of Diseases) are available at: [www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h07](#). Changes took effect July 1, 2023.
- Probable and confirmed cases of these diseases should be reported to the local Medical Officer of Health by the next working day. Fax a [reportable disease notification form](#) to 519-633-0468 or call 1-800-922-0096
- Refer to disease-specific information from the Ministry of Health: [Anaplasmosis](#), [Babesiosis](#), [Powassan Virus](#)
- Review ticks in Canada and health risk from exposure ([link](#)).



Southwestern Public Health
[www.swpublichealth.ca](#)
1-800-922-0096



IMMUNIZATION RECORDS REVIEW: THANK YOU

- The SWPH Immunization Team extends a big thank you to healthcare providers across the region for support and collaboration for the 2023 Elementary and Secondary School immunization record review.
- More than 35,000 student records were reviewed in the Provincial database with over 30% of records flagged as overdue or missing.
- Your teams assisted us with updating immunizations, faxing records, providing copies to patients, answering questions about records interpretations, and more. We Thank You.

ONTARIO'S IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE

- SWPH Immunization nurses will visit your clinic to bring hard copies of the most recent Immunization Schedule in Ontario. Electronic version: [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario June 2022 \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.gov.on.ca/publichealth/immunization/schedule/)
- This Schedule includes important resources, such as routine schedules in Ontario, catch up schedules for those who have had delays or vaccinated outside of Ontario, high-risk programs and schedules, eligibility criteria, and minimum and recommended intervals between doses for vaccine series.
- Refer to this resource in your practice to ensure vaccines are given at the right time. Contact jfletcher@swpublichealth.ca with any questions or for additional copies.

STRUCTURED PSYCHOTHERAPY SUPPORT FOR ADULTS

- Ontario has free, evidence-based, limited-time CBT therapy for individuals aged 18 and older experiencing depressions and low mood, anxiety, PTSD, unexpected panic attacks, agoraphobia, specific fears, OCD, or other anxiety and stress related concerns.
- Access through self-referral or referral from a healthcare provider using [the referral pathway](#).
- View the [information sheet](#) for details.

BALANCED BEGINNING: A NEW CBT PROGRAM AT PUBLIC HEALTH

- Southwestern Public Health is launching a no-cost [new perinatal cognitive behaviour therapy program](#) this fall for individuals who are pregnant or who have a child under 18 months of age.
- This program is not intended for individuals who have pre-existing or complex mental health or psychological conditions (i.e., psychosis, bipolar disorder, etc.).
- Access through self-referral at www.swpublichealth.ca/balancedbeginning.
- **Now accepting sign ups for fall group session (9 weeks):** St. Thomas begins October 17; Woodstock begins September 20.
- **ACTION:** Please share this sign up form with patients / clients ([Link to form](#))

EXTREME HEAT INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

- The number of extreme heat events increases in Canada every year, and can have adverse effects, especially for vulnerable populations.
- Review these resources and share with patients: [Extreme Heat and Human Health for Pharmacy](#) and [Staying Healthy in Extreme Heat](#)