

Public Health Update from Southwestern Public Health



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

January 26, 2023

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

Public Health: What You Need to Know

RESPIRATORY UPDATES

GENERAL RESPIRATORY VIRUS UPDATE

- Refer to the SWPH Respiratory Virus Activity Dashboard for details: <https://www.swpublichealth.ca/en/shared-content/respiratory-virus-activity-dashboard.aspx>

COVID-19 VACCINATION CLINICS AT SWPH

- COVID-19 vaccine appointments are now available to book for children aged 6 months to 12 years, and adults aged 65+ via our portal ([link](#))

OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATES

CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

- ACTION:** Please remind your rostered clients if they are eligible for a cervical screening.
- Refer to the [Guidance Summary](#) from Cancer Care Ontario, and additional [Guidance for Screening at Age 25](#).
- SWPH also offers Pap tests through our sexual health clinic for those without a primary care provider. Visit www.swpublichealth.ca/sexualhealth for more information.

LOCAL iGAS UPDATE

- In January 2024, the SWPH region had 3 confirmed iGAS cases, of which 1 case was under the age of 18 years.
- The number of iGAS cases reported in Ontario this season has been higher in both adults and children compared to fall 2022. The highest rates of illness are reported in adults aged 65+, and children aged 1-9 years.
- ACTION:** Continue to monitor for signs and symptoms of iGAS and report cases as a [disease of public health significance](#) using [existing processes](#).
- ACTION:** Consider printing and posting [this fact sheet resource about iGAS](#) in your patient areas (e.g., waiting rooms, clinical rooms, etc.).

Southwestern Public Health
www.swpublichealth.ca
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EXTENDED ELIGIBILITY ON PUBLICLY FUNDED VACCINATIONS

- The Ministry of Health recently released confirmed extended eligibility for several publicly funded vaccinations.
- These extensions for 2024 describe missed doses for **School Vaccines** (Hep B, HPV-9, and Men-C-ACYW135), **Adult Vaccines** (HZ), and **High-Risk program Vaccines** (HPV-9, 4CMenB, and Men-C-ACYW135)
 - This document indicates the applicable vaccines for continued access for missed doses beyond age or grade-based eligibility criteria and outlines eligible cohorts, and the timeframe individuals must receive missed vaccine doses.
 - Since several vaccines have age- or grade-based eligibility, some individuals may have missed their opportunity to receive the recommended vaccines under the publicly funded program resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and public health measures.
- The document can be found here: [Guidance for Routine & Catch-Up Immunization Services](#).

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS REVIEW

- SWPH's Vaccine Preventable Diseases team will conduct an extensive, complete immunization record review for all students attending elementary schools to ensure compliance with the Immunization of School Pupils Act ([ISPA](#)) immediately.
- **An elementary school suspension date of MARCH 20 2024**, is being planned. Any student who remains outstanding (vaccination status or providing SWPH with an up-to-date vaccination record) will be suspended from attending school for 20 days at which point it may be extended.
- **Letters will be provided to families indicating what vaccines / vaccination records are outstanding through the child's school in mid to late January.**
- **ACTION:** Prepare for increased requests for vaccines because of this process.
 - Vaccine orders can be placed and picked up on a weekly basis (if approved fridge temperatures are provided and a preconditioned transport carrier is presented at pick up).
 - Report immunizations [online](#), in person at 1230 Talbot Street in St. Thomas or 410 Buller Street in Woodstock, or by mail.
 - Immunization records are to be provided to families at **no cost** in accordance with the Health Insurance Act (HIA) and its regulations.
 - **Per the Ministry of Health**, the request by a school or health unit for a record of immunization to the parent is not a request to the physician for documentation and does not make the documentation of the immunization service uninsured.
 - **Under S. 24 (1.1) of Regulation 552 under the HIA**, the production, completion or transmission of a patient's immunization status is insured as part of an insured service when this information is:
 - required as evidence of immunization status for admission to or continued attendance in a daycare or preschool program or a school, community college, university or other educational institution or program; or
 - required to receive anything under a program administered by the Minister of Health.

MMR VACCINATIONS FOR TRAVEL

- Ontario residents aged 6 months and older are eligible for publicly funded MMR vaccine if they are at increased risk due to travel to areas of concern,
- **ACTION:** Please take the opportunity to assess possible risk related to travel when administering the routine immunizations at 6 months of age. Two additional doses are required at ≥ 1 year of age.