



SOUTHWEST IPAC HUB

Fall 2023 Update



WHAT IS THE IPAC HUB?



The Southwest IPAC Hub is a collaboration between **Middlesex-London Health Unit**, the **Huron Perth and Area Ontario Health Team** and **Southwestern Public Health**. We provide advice, guidance and direct supports to IPAC leads and those responsible for IPAC in congregate living settings including Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, Group Homes, Shelters, Supportive Housing, Residential Treatment Centres and Hospices.



WHAT SERVICES DO WE PROVIDE?

The e-newsletter is distributed electronically to Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes and Congregate Living Settings in Southwest IPAC Hub region.

Contact your IPAC Hub: ipachub@swpublichealth.ca

Our team works collaboratively with partners to provide the following IPAC services and supports:

- Development of education and training programs and materials
- Supportive visits and consultations
- Assistance with IPAC self-assessments
- Best practice recommendations and implementation support
- Coaching/mentoring on IPAC practices
- Outbreak management planning
- Communities of practice



MEET THE SW IPAC HUB TEAM

Huron Perth >>>



Sonalben Shah is a seasoned ICP with a background in microbiology and vast experience in acute care setting. She specializes in implementing and optimizing protocols to prevent the spread of diseases within healthcare settings. Dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of hygiene and safety, she strives to safeguard patients, residents and healthcare workers.



Janice McIntyre is a registered nurse for over 40 years and has been certified in infection control since 2011. She has previous experience as an informatics programmer and nursing support from 2001 to 2006. She has extensive experience in infection control and provided IPAC support to an acute care facility from 2006 to 2018. She currently works with the South West IPAC Hub.

Oxford Elgin >>>



Kitty Chan began her career as a Public Health Inspector in 2003 and has worked on the Infectious Disease Team since 2008. She has been a CIC since 2016 and currently works with the South West IPAC Hub. She also holds current certification in medical device reprocessing from MDRAO. Kitty looks forward to working with all congregate living settings to provide IPAC guidance and support.



Elaine Reddick is a manager at Southwestern Public Health and the lead of the South West IPAC Hub. She has been a CIC since 2007.

Middlesex London >>>



Duc Mai is a Public Health Inspector and an Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Lead on the Infectious Disease and Control Team at the Middlesex-London Health Unit. Duc received his Bachelor of Science from McMaster University holds a Master of Public Health degree from the University of Waterloo. As an IPAC Lead, Duc plays a role in ensuring the safety and well-being of the community by providing guidance, education and assessments related to infection prevention and control. He is a member of the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors and IPAC Southwestern Ontario.

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LEGIONELLOSIS >>>



Legionella bacteria occur naturally and are commonly found in freshwater, lakes, streams and soil. They can become a health concern when allowed to multiply due to warm water temperatures in manufactured environments such as hot tubs, showerheads, decorative fountains, hot water tanks and cooling towers etc.

Legionella multiply quickly under various conditions such as water temperature between 20°C and 45°C, water stagnation (i.e., periods of low usage), the presence of biofilm and essential nutrients sources (sludge, scale, rust, algae) and in poorly maintained water systems.

Most healthy people exposed to Legionella do not get sick. People who are older than 50 years, current or former smokers, have chronic lung diseases, weakened immune systems or underlying illnesses are more vulnerable to the infection.

Infection occurs through inhalation of aerosolized particles generated from water systems; person to person spread of Legionella is unlikely. In addition to pneumonia, other symptoms may include fever, cough, muscle pain, chest pain and headache.

Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes and other Congregate Living Settings often serve populations at highest risk. Some of the most effective strategies used to reduce the risk of Legionnaires' disease include proper water temperature management, supplemental disinfection and eliminating stagnant water conditions.

Legionnaires' disease may present as pneumonia which cannot be clinically differentiated from other causes of pneumonia. In addition, the infection is often underdiagnosed as Legionella is not routinely tested with viral nasopharyngeal swabs used during outbreaks. If there are multiple cases of pneumonia with unidentified pathogen in your facility, testing for bacterial pneumonia such as Legionella should be considered.

For more information about Legionella, please visit [Public Health Ontario Legionella: questions and answers, 2nd edition.](#)

Do you know when Legionnaires' disease first hit the headlines?

The serious respiratory illness called Legionnaires disease first came to prominence following an outbreak in America in July 1976. It got its name after affecting many of those at the 58th annual convention of the American Legion in Philadelphia. Over 200 people were taken ill, and by the time the outbreak came to an end, 34 people had died.



IPAC SWO (your local Chapter of IPAC Canada) offers

IPAC SWO is pleased to announce a return to in-person chapter meetings for June and September! We also offer [webinars](#) and [educational workshops](#) to meet the educational needs of our members.

Visit their website for chapter meeting details: <https://swo.ipac-canada.org/>

In addition to chapter meetings and educational sessions, IPAC SWO proudly offers:

- Scholarship funding for members to attend the Annual IPAC Canada National Conference
- Support in preparing for Certification in Infection Prevention and Control (CIC)
- Funding opportunities for IPAC Education, CIC certification, and renewal
- Opportunities to connect with IPAC professionals regionally and across Canada
- To join IPAC-Canada and IPAC-SWO, visit [IPAC-Canada](#) and view this [welcome brochure](#).

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION IN HEALTH CARE SETTINGS >>>

Construction and renovation projects in healthcare facilities may pose potential threat of infection to staff and residents, especially those with underlying medical conditions. Healthcare associated infections such as Aspergillus and Legionella have previously been associated with construction and renovation. The Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Lead has an important role and they should be involved in planning, decision-making and ensuring IPAC best practices are followed during all stages of construction and renovation.

Facilities should also ensure hired contractors have relevant IPAC education and experience related to construction, renovation, and maintenance projects in healthcare settings.

A construction risk assessment matrix is useful in determining the measures needed to reduce the risk of infections. The type of construction or renovation activity as well as the population risk group and geographical location are assessed, resulting in specific protective practices to be implemented for the duration of the construction or renovation project.

For more information, please see Public Health Ontario [Construction, Renovation, Maintenance and Design \(CRMD\)](#) and Health Canada/Public Health Agency of Canada: [Construction-related Nosocomial Infections in Patients in Health Care Facilities Decreasing the Risk of Aspergillus, Legionella and Other Infections](#)

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/legionella/about/causes-transmission.html>

[http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-](http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%201%20-%20CDC/Legionella_Guidelines.pdf)

[gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%201%20-%20CDC/Legionella_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/resource-gallery/Documents/Guidelines%20and%20Forms/Guidelines%20and%20Manuals/Epid/CD%20Manual/Chapter%201%20-%20CDC/Legionella_Guidelines.pdf)



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE >>>

Elgin, London, Middlesex, Oxford:

September

- RTH - September 20 @11:00 a.m.
- Congregate Living - September 21st @11:00 a.m.
- LTCH - September 26th 1:00 p.m.

October

- RTH – October 18 @ 11:00 a.m.
- Congregate Living October 19 11:00 a.m.
- LTC October 31 @1:00 p.m.

Huron, Perth:

October

- LTCH & RH IPAC Leads - October 4th
- Congregate Living - October 6th
- LTCH - October 11th
- RTH - October 18th
- Open MIC October 27th

Opportunity for all groups to attend and share. Reach out to your IPAC Hub to get on the invite list for upcoming community of practice meetings.

PREPARING FOR THIS OUTBREAK SEASON >>>

Education for Staff, Residents and Visitors

Continuing IPAC education is important in preventing the transmission of infections in all congregate living settings and is an essential component to your IPAC program.

Facilities should provide “refresher” training to staff, residents and families to ensure they are kept up to date with current IPAC practices.



FOR RESIDENTS >>>

- Reporting of symptoms to staff if feeling unwell
- Review of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Importance of staying up to date with immunizations

FOR STAFF: >>>

- Review of point of care risk assessment and the appropriate use of PPE
- Four moments of hand hygiene
- Roles and responsibilities during outbreaks
- Exclusion policies of the home
- Importance of staying up to date with immunizations.

FOR VISITORS: >>>

- Self-monitoring and screening for symptoms prior to visit
- Postpone visits if feeling unwell
- Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and appropriate use of PPE
- Importance of staying up-to-date with immunizations.



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