
2021-2022 Community Influenza Surveillance Report

Update of Current Status

November 10th, 2021

First Report of the 2021-2022 Season

The 2021-2022 influenza surveillance season is underway and the Middlesex-London Health Unit is once again pleased to provide its weekly *Community Influenza Surveillance Report*.

The *Community Influenza Surveillance Report* is one of the most important ways the Health Unit communicates during the influenza season with health professionals, community partners, local media, and the community at large to provide up-to-date information about influenza and respiratory illness in London and Middlesex County. These reports are released each Wednesday during influenza season and include an overall assessment, details of the current level of influenza activity, and links to useful information.

Overall Assessment

The current level of influenza activity in London and Middlesex County is low. There have been no laboratory-confirmed influenza cases identified in the Middlesex-London region since the start of this year's influenza season (August 29th, 2021); however, a few other regions in Ontario have already reported sporadic influenza activity this season. To date, there has been a total of seven influenza cases in Ontario this season (4 Influenza A, 3 Influenza B).

Analysis and Action

The influenza season in Ontario has begun. Local residents are encouraged to get their seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as possible, well in advance of peak influenza activity.

Regardless of the level of local influenza activity, there are a number of easy-to-follow steps local residents can take to avoid becoming sick throughout the year. While washing your hands frequently with soap and warm water for 15-20 seconds or using a waterless hand sanitizer (with at least 70 percent alcohol content), remains an effective way to prevent many illnesses, including influenza, local residents should continue to follow recommended COVID-19 prevention practices such as:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow,
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth,
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as doorknobs, frequently,
- Stay home when feeling sick,
- Maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from anyone you do not live with, and
- Wear a mask in enclosed places, or where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Details of Current Local Activity

Between October 31st and November 6th there were no laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza reported to the Health Unit, nor have there been any laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza reported in the Middlesex-London region since the beginning of the influenza surveillance season on August 29th, 2021.

Appendix A provides more detail about laboratory-based influenza activity indicators for the current reporting week, as well as other local indicators of respiratory illness.

Provincial and National Comparison

In this week's *Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin*, Public Health Ontario states that influenza activity in health units across the province is lower compared to the previous week. In the most recent week, no specimens tested were positive for influenza A or influenza B.

In this week's *FluWatch*, the Public Health Agency of Canada reports exceptionally low influenza activity across Canada with almost all regions reporting no cases of influenza.

- The latest *Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin*, issued by Public Health Ontario (PHO), is available at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/commonly-used-products/respiratory-pathogens-weekly>
- The latest *FluWatch* report, issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/influenza-surveillance/weekly-influenza-reports.html>

Appendix A
Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators for Middlesex-London
October 31st and November 6th, 2021

Table 1: Summary of laboratory-based influenza activity indicators, Middlesex-London and Ontario, 2021-2022 influenza surveillance season

Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Number Reported: <i>Year to Date</i> <i>(from August 29, 2021)</i>	Recent Trends
Laboratory-confirmed cases ^{1, 4}	Oct. 31-Nov. 6 (week 44) ²	Influenza A – 0 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A – 0 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A: Same as the previous week (Oct. 24-30) when no cases were reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (Oct. 24-30) when no cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types ¹	Oct. 31-Nov. 6	0	0	No local cases reported to date.
Hospitalizations ^{1, 5}	Oct. 31-Nov. 6	0	0	No local cases reported to date.
Deaths ^{1, 5}	Oct. 31-Nov. 6	0	0	No local cases reported to date.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	Oct. 31-Nov. 6	Influenza A – 0 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 0 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks	No local institutional influenza outbreaks declared to date.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario) ³	Oct. 24-30 (week 43) ²	Influenza A – 0% positivity Influenza B – 0% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Similar to <0.1% positivity reported the previous week (Oct. 17-23). Influenza B: Same as 0% positivity reported the previous week (Oct. 17-23).

Notes:

1 Numbers are subject to change week by week due to the retrospective nature of reporting.

2 Weekly influenza monitoring often uses numbered weeks from 1 to 52 weeks per year. A reference week calendar can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/influenza-surveillance/fluwatch-weeks-calendar.html>

3 Public Health Ontario, [Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin](#) 2021-2022.

4 The week cases are reported to the Health Unit may not be the same as week of illness onset.

5 The week hospitalizations and deaths are reported to the Health Unit may not be the same as the week in which they occurred, or the same as the week of illness onset.

Table 2: Summary of community-based respiratory illness indicators, Middlesex-London, 2021-2022 influenza surveillance season

Indicator	Reporting Period	Number Reported: <i>Current Reporting Period</i>	Recent Trends
Middlesex-London hospital emergency department visits - percentage of patients with respiratory or fever symptoms¹	Oct. 31-Nov. 6	<p>An average of 8.0% of patients presented with respiratory symptoms.</p> <p>An average of 2.5% of patients presented with influenza-like illness (fever) symptoms.</p>	<p>Slightly Higher than 7.2% reported the previous week (Oct. 24-30).</p> <p>Similar to 2.4% reported the previous week (Oct. 24-30).</p>
Real-time Viral Respiratory Surveillance² - Middlesex-London	Oct. 31-Nov. 6	Activity/Risk Level: Low or Green (No significant impacts on acute care sector).	Same (Low) as previous week (Oct. 24-30).

¹ [Acute Care Enhanced Surveillance](#) (ACES) Application is a real-time syndromic surveillance system. This source will be influenced by COVID-19 activity.

² [Viral Respiratory Mapper](#) uses data from ACES (above). Activity/Risk Levels range from Green, Yellow, Orange and Red.

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