

2021-2022 Community Influenza Surveillance Report

Update of Current Status

June 8th, 2022

Overall Assessment

Influenza continues to circulate in London and Middlesex County. Although the level of activity remains low, it is above what has come to be expected during a typical influenza season at this time of year. More than three quarters (79%) of Ontario public health units continue to report localized or sporadic influenza activity. So far this season, there have been 1,354 confirmed cases of influenza reported in Ontario (1,343 influenza A, 11 influenza B).

Analysis and Action

Regardless of the level of local influenza activity, there are a number of easy-to-follow steps residents can take to avoid becoming sick throughout the year. 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. As the pandemic continues, local residents are also advised to continue following these COVID-19 prevention practices:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow,
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth,
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces, such as doorknobs, handrails, countertops, etc. frequently,
- Stay home when feeling sick, and
- Continue to wear a mask in enclosed public places where physical distancing cannot be maintained, as recommended by the Health Unit.

Details of Current Local Activity

Between May 29th and June 4th, there were three laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza A and no cases of influenza B reported to the Health Unit. This brings the total number of influenza A cases reported since surveillance began on August 29th, 2021, to 45.

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 reports that influenza activity in health units across the province was lower than the previous week. In the most recent week, 131 confirmed cases of influenza A and no confirmed cases of influenza B were reported in Ontario. This is lower than the 217 cases of influenza A reported across Ontario in the previous week.

In this week's *FluWatch* and *Respiratory Virus Report*, the Public Health Agency of Canada noted that influenza A activity continues to decline but remains above typical seasonal thresholds with influenza activity being reported in almost all regions of Canada. When compared to other respiratory viruses tested, influenza A cases decreased but remain above expected levels for this time of year.

- 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>
- The latest *Respiratory Virus Report* issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), is available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/surveillance/respiratory-virus-detections-canada.html>

Appendix A

Summary of Community Influenza Surveillance Indicators for Middlesex-London May 29th to June 4th, 2022

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}	May 29-June 4 (week 22) ²	Influenza A – 3 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A – 45 cases Influenza B – 0 cases	Influenza A: Lower than the previous week (May 22-28) when four cases were reported. Influenza B: Same as the previous week (May 22-28) when no cases were reported.
Influenza sub-types ¹	May 29-June 4	Influenza A (H3) – 0 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 3 cases	Influenza A (H3) – 9 cases Influenza A not yet subtyped – 36 cases	N/A
Hospitalizations ^{1, 5}	May 29-June 4	1	15	Same as the previous week (May 22-28) when one hospitalization was reported.
Deaths ^{1, 5}	May 29-June 4	0	0	Same as the previous week (May 22-28) when no deaths were reported.
Influenza outbreaks in long-term care homes/retirement homes/acute care	May 29-June 4	Influenza A – 0 outbreaks Influenza B – 0 outbreaks	Influenza A – 1 outbreak Influenza B – 0 outbreaks	Same as the previous week (May 22-28) when no outbreaks were reported.
Percentage of samples that are positive for influenza (Ontario) ³	May 22-28 (week 21) ²	Influenza A – 4.6% positivity Influenza B – 0% positivity	N/A	Influenza A: Lower than 6.2% positivity reported the previous week (May 15-21). Influenza B: Same as 0% positivity reported the previous week (May 15-21).

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. Numbers reported represent results submitted to CIRID from 17 participating labs in Ontario and does not include all testing laboratories, [ORPB Interactive Website Data Caveats and Glossary](#)

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	May 29-June 4	An average of 11.5% of patients presented with respiratory symptoms. An average of 3.8% of patients presented with influenza-like illness (fever) symptoms.	Slightly Lower than 12.4% reported the previous week (May 22-28). Similar to 4.2% reported the previous week (May 22-28).
Real-time Viral Respiratory Surveillance² - Middlesex-London	May 29-June 4	Activity/Risk Level: Moderate or Yellow (Increased visit volumes to Emergency Departments and absenteeism may be noted).	Lower than level (Elevated or Orange) reported the previous week (May 22-28).

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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