

1-866-888-4577

## Communicable Diseases/Outbreaks

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November 17, 2016

Attention: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Hospitals, Emergency Rooms/Infection Control/Occupational Health, Walk-In Clinics, Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, EMS, Corrections

### **RE: FIRST CASE OF INFLUENZA IN HKPR AREA**

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit has received notification of our first laboratory confirmed case of influenza for the 2016/2017 season. Influenza can affect persons of all ages and is associated with increased otitis media (young children), pneumonia and hospitalizations. Influenza vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. A reminder that those children 6 months to < 9 years of age who have never had a flu shot should receive two doses of vaccine, at least 4 weeks apart. For best results, use the same vaccine, if available.

Influenza should be suspected in patients with the following signs and symptoms: cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose or sneezing, swollen or tender glands in the neck (cervical lymphadenopathy), malaise, myalgia, loss of appetite, headache, fatigue, or chills. In the elderly, fever may be absent or be manifested as an abnormal temperature for the individual (temperature  $\leq 35.5^{\circ}\text{C}$  or  $\geq 37.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ ). Children may present with nausea and vomiting, though these symptoms are not common in adults with influenza.

Influenza testing kits with nasopharyngeal swabs can be obtained from the Public Health Lab at 705-743-6811. It is highly important to test health care workers if influenza is suspected. Please advise your patients who have influenza-like illness that they are infectious for up to five days after the onset of their illness. **Children are infectious for up to seven days.** Patients who have influenza-like illness should stay home during the infectious period.

### **Recommendations:**

#### **Health Care Providers**

- Continue to offer influenza vaccine to patients and staff

#### **Hospitals**

- Ensure all patients in complex continuing care units have been offered influenza vaccination
- Increase efforts to ensure maximum influenza vaccination coverage among all staff
- Remain alert for symptoms of respiratory illness, implement appropriate precautions, and collect diagnostic specimens for influenza when appropriate. Note the patient setting (i.e. inpatient ICU, inpatient ward) on requisitions for specimens sent to the Public Health Lab

#### **Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes**

- Ensure all residents have been offered influenza vaccination
- Increase efforts to ensure that all staff have been vaccinated against influenza
- Ensure process is in place to obtain antivirals if needed
- Review outbreak recognition and management guidelines; ensure outbreak kits and nasopharyngeal swab kits are readily available
- Contact the Health Unit immediately if you suspect an outbreak

#### **Emergency Service Workers**

- Increase efforts to ensure that all staff have been vaccinated against influenza
- Use appropriate PPE when transporting individuals with respiratory symptoms

**If you have any questions about this notice, please contact the Health Unit and ask to speak with a nurse in the Communicable Disease Control, Epidemiology and Evaluation Department.**

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705-457-1391

Lindsay  
705-324-3569

Port Hope  
905-885-9100

After Hours  
1-888-255-7839