

Influenza-related deaths: Public Health response, key messages and Q&A:

Public Health response:

- Public Health is adding extended clinic hours over the weekend:

Guelph	Friday	1:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m., Chancellors Way
	Saturday	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Fergus	Friday	2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
	Saturday	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Orangeville	Friday	2:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
	Saturday	10:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
- Members of the community can call to get more information about the flu, and where they can get vaccinated in the community at 1-800-265-7293. Phone lines will be open Friday till 7p.m. and Saturday until 7 p.m.

Key Messages

- Influenza is circulating in the communities of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph.
- Every year the flu causes deaths in communities across Canada.
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health can confirm one influenza-related death and one suspected influenza-related death of elementary school children in the region.
- In Southwestern Ontario influenza B is circulating and causing increased illness.

- The flu is a respiratory illness that can cause serious illness especially in the young, seniors, pregnant women and those with underlying medical conditions.
- The best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated and to wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Based on school surveillance we are seeing a very high rate of school absenteeism.

- In addition to getting vaccinated, you should:
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water
 - Carry an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
 - Cough or sneeze into a tissue or shirt sleeve instead of your hands
 - Keep hands away from your eyes, ears, nose, and mouth when possible
 - Stay home from work or school when sick to avoid spreading the virus to others
- The flu is spread by coughing and sneezing and can travel up to six feet when released through a sneeze or cough. Flu germs can survive on a surface for an extended period of time.
- Public Health is advising parents to have their children and themselves vaccinated at their local pharmacy, health care provider or at Public Health.

Questions & Answers:

Information for staff, the media, public, physicians and BOH

February 9, 2018

General Questions

1. Which schools did the children attend?
 - The schools are not being identified to protect the privacy of the families.

2. Are the two deaths related?
 - Public Health is working closely with the coroner's office. These cases are being treated as unrelated.

3. Did either of the affected children have pre-existing health conditions?
 - We are not releasing any personal health information. But in general, anyone with a pre-existing health condition are at a higher risk.

4. Is there an increased risk to children at this time?

- Infants and young children are always at increased risk for complications of influenza.
5. Should I keep my child home from school?
- If your child is showing symptoms, you should keep them home from school for 5 to 7 days. Because the flu virus is widespread within our community it is possible to get influenza from any setting. If you or your children are not immunized please consider getting a flu shot.
6. Who should I call if I have any concerns about the flu?
- You can call WDGPH at 1-800-265-7293 or speak to your pharmacist or doctor.
7. Is the vaccine a good match for this season's flu?
- The recommended vaccine for children covers four strains of the influenza virus. The strain which is currently circulating is in the vaccine.
 - The exact effectiveness of the vaccine used in Canada cannot be determined until the end of the flu season. However, a recent Canadian study did indicate that the vaccine is 55% effective against the B strain which is currently circulating in Southwestern Ontario.
 - Previous announcements of the vaccine's effectiveness are based on results from the southern hemisphere (i.e. Australia's flu season).