

2023-09-08

Dear students, staff, and families,

KFL&A Public Health has received laboratory confirmation of the first case of influenza A in the community for the 2023-2024 season. Influenza activity typically increases over the fall months and peaks towards the holiday season.

Influenza causes mild to severe illness and can lead to serious health complications, even in healthy children and adults. Symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, chills, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, sore throat, and runny nose. Young children may also experience nausea and vomiting.

Although current respiratory disease activity in our community is low, it's important to follow these simple measures that help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses including influenza.

1. Stay home if you are sick or have new or worsening symptoms.

- Staying home until you have no fever and symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea).
- Wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings (including school and childcare) for 10 days after symptoms start.

2. Clean hands and practice good respiratory etiquette.

- Frequently clean hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Consistently cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow.
- If wearing a mask, choose a tight-fitting, well-constructed mask.

3. Disinfect high-touch surfaces.

- Regularly clean and disinfect high touch objects and surfaces in your home, such as door handles, counters, and toys, particularly if someone in the home is sick.

4. Get your flu vaccine when it becomes available and stay up-to-date with COVID-19 vaccines.

- Flu vaccine is expected to become available in mid-October, with initial availability for those at high risk, including children six months to five years of age, adults 65 years of age or older, pregnant individuals, indigenous peoples, and those living with certain chronic health conditions.
- Vaccination is one of the best defenses against influenza and COVID-19.

When the flu vaccine becomes available, individuals can access through:

- Health care providers (for individuals aged six months and older).
- Local pharmacies (for individuals aged two years and older).
- KFL&A Public Health clinics (for residents with children six months to two years of age and those over 65 years).

For more information on respiratory illness prevention or if you have additional questions, please visit www.kflaph.ca/RespiratoryInfections or call 613-549-1232.