

12 December 2018

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff:

RE: First Influenza A Confirmed Case of the Season

Please be advised that KFL&A Public Health has received laboratory confirmation of the first case of Influenza A for the 2018-2019 season. We are providing this information so that you will be able to protect yourself and your family to the greatest degree possible.

Influenza causes mild to severe illness and can lead to serious health complications, even in healthy children and adults. Immunization is the best way to prevent influenza. The influenza vaccine (flu shot) is available free of charge to anyone in Ontario over the age of 6 months. Contact your family physician or local pharmacy for your influenza vaccine if your family has not yet been immunized. Even in years when there is a strain mismatch, the flu vaccine will still offer some protection.

Next to immunization, the single most important way to prevent the spread of infection is to clean hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers should only be used for children if they are assisted and should be stored out of reach of young children.

The symptoms of influenza include fever (greater than 38.0°C/100.4 °F), dry cough, chills, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, sore throat, and runny nose. Young children may also experience nausea and vomiting with the above symptoms.

Adults with influenza may be infectious for five days after the onset of their symptoms whereas children may be infectious for up to seven days. **If you or your child have symptoms of influenza, it is important to stay home during the infectious period to avoid spreading the illness to others.**

For more information on influenza activity in our area, go to our *ILI Mapper* application at <http://aces.kflaphi.ca/iliMapper/>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our Communicable Disease Team at 613-549-1232 ext. 2300.

Sincerely,



Adrienne Hansen-Taugh, BScN, RN, MPA
Manager, Communicable Disease and Emergency Preparedness