

Antiviral Prophylaxis

Antiviral prophylaxis is now recommended for all staff regardless of vaccination status, for the duration of an Influenza outbreak unless the strain is identified as a vaccine-matched strain (H1N1, H3N2 [non subclade k], or influenza B). This update reflects current guidance based on surveillance indicating that the circulating strain this season is not well-matched by the current vaccine.

What This Means:

Staff can obtain a prescription for influenza antivirals through their healthcare providers or a pharmacy. Antiviral prophylaxis does not replace annual influenza immunization. While the vaccine is not well matched to prevent contracting the dominant circulating strain, preliminary evidence shows that there is enough of a match to prevent hospitalization. Vaccination is strongly recommended as we see hospitalizations due to Influenza rise.

Public Health Ontario Updates

New Point of Care Risk Assessment Infographic

Conducting a PCRA is an essential component of IPAC Routine Practices. It helps healthcare workers assess potential risks to patients/residents/clients and determine IPAC measures to prevent exposure to and the spread of infectious agents before each interaction.

This [Point of Care Risk Assessment](#) infographic serves as a clear, visual reminder to perform a PCRA before every interaction across all healthcare settings. It can be displayed at entrances to care or activity areas or any common staff spaces.

Respiratory Testing

As of January 5, 2026, submitters shall use [PHO's General Test Requisition](#) for all respiratory virus testing including COVID-19. PHO will no longer accept specimens submitted with the COVID-19 and Respiratory Virus Test Requisition Form.

Individuals with gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms only are not routinely eligible for respiratory viral testing, despite GI symptoms being recognized as a possible associated feature of some respiratory viral illnesses. This is to protect laboratory resources and testing requests must be discussed with the health unit to facilitate approval with PHO Laboratory prior to submission.

Specimen Collection Material Services

Effective April 1, 2026, PHO will be transitioning away from supplying specimen collection material for clinical laboratory testing to multiple settings including long term cares homes, hospitals and various clinics.

What this means: Clients should arrange to receive these supplies through alternative vendors. Respiratory test kits should remain available for ordering through the PPE portal.

Congregate living settings can continue to obtain specimen kits from Lakelands Public Health as outlined below:

HKPR Region: Pick up respiratory and enteric outbreak kits at your nearest health unit office, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m. No call ahead is required.

Peterborough Region: Call 1-866-888-4577 ext. 1232 or email infectiousdiseases@lakelandsph.ca to request kits.

Training Opportunities for Congregate Living Settings

Info Session: How to get Frontline Staff Buy-in for IPAC

Do you sometimes feel like you are the only one who cares about IPAC in your facility? Would you like staff to be more engaged? This presentation will provide you with engagement theory and ideas to get more frontline staff buy-in for IPAC.

Join us February 25, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. for Part 2 of our series on staff engagement with Margaret Cameron.

If you are unable to attend, visit our website to view a recording, along with past webinars.

[Microsoft Teams Invite](#)

Meeting ID:

254 232 272 498 40

Passcode: 4do38xK2

Public Health Ontario

Building strong foundational infection prevention knowledge is key to keeping congregate living settings safe. Public Health Ontario offers a free, online IPAC course for staff working in congregate living settings who do not have formal health-care training. Designed for environments such as shelters, group homes, and residential treatment centres, the course covers practical topics including hand hygiene, safe use of personal protective equipment, risk assessment, and basic outbreak management. Details can be found [here](#).

PHO will be offering monthly drop-in coaching sessions in February and March:

Surveillance: Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 12pm to 1pm EST

You may review the presentation slides from the PHO Webinar: [IPAC Orientation for IPAC Leads in Long-Term Care: Surveillance](#). We suggest viewing this prior to the coaching session!

UTI Program: Friday, March 13, 2026, 11am to 12pm EST

You may review the presentation slides from the PHO Webinar: [The Urinary Tract Infection Program for Long Term Care Homes](#). We suggest viewing this prior to the coaching session!

Coaching Session

Login Information

[Zoom Invite](#)

Meeting ID:

830 2784 6796

Passcode: 992154

Respiratory Infection Dashboard

Lakelands Public Health has a new Respiratory Infection Dashboard: [Dashboard](#).

The Respiratory Infection Dashboard is updated every Tuesday throughout the respiratory season to include data on weekly emergency department visits, hospitalizations, and outbreaks. The dashboard will assign an overall respiratory virus activity level along with recommendations to prevent the spread of disease. Facilities are strongly encouraged to use the dashboard and associated recommendations to reduce the spread of respiratory diseases in our community.

Outbreak Alerts

Please sign up for [Outbreak Alerts](#) to be notified of outbreaks in our region.

Overall Respiratory Virus Activity



Report updated 2 Feb 2026

Overall respiratory virus activity is
Moderate

Overall respiratory activity is only reported at the health unit level. This report is dated for the week of publication and includes the most recent data available. Some data are delayed by a minimum of one week.

ED Visits for Respiratory Syndromes compared to the previous week	COVID-19 Cases compared to the previous week	Influenza Cases compared to the previous week	Outbreaks for all respiratory viruses compared to the previous week	Hospitalizations for COVID-19, influenza, and RSV compared to the previous week
Similar	Lower	Lower	Lower	Similar

Current respiratory virus activity level recommendations

- Outdoor or small group masked gatherings are suggested. If gathering indoors pay attention to ventilation (through windows/doors/mechanical/air filtration means) to decrease risks of transmission.
- Masks are recommended for high-risk indoor public spaces or when interacting with high risk individuals.
- Limit attending high-risk settings.

Break Up the Long Winter Days with an Interactive IPAC Day!

Feeling the winter blues? Try this to get back in the groove of things.

We had a blast at Fairhaven LTCH showing staff and residents how effective handwashing is at reducing spread of illnesses, the importance of proper PPE use, and busting myths about infection control. Send us an email ipachub@lakelandsph.ca to invite us over – we promise the fun is infectious – just not THAT kind of infectious!



IPAC WhatsApp Networking Group



We are excited to announce the **WhatsApp Networking Group!**

This group is designed to give facility staff an opportunity to connect with peers from other facilities, share ideas, ask questions, and learn from one another.

Please review the [Terms of Reference](#) and reach out to us at ipachub@lakelandsph.ca to join.

Immunization

Specific questions relating to the ordering and administration of vaccine can be directed to: immunization@lakelandsph.ca or immunizationrecords@lakelandsph.ca.

IPAC Hub Education

The Lakelands IPAC Hub offers education training sessions for your home and/or staff on a variety of topics. To request a session, complete the [IPAC Education Request Form](#) on our website. For general inquiries, contact your regional IPAC Hub specialist directly or at ipachub@lakelandsph.ca.

Webinars and Helpful Resources

Visit IPAC Canada to see upcoming webinars and learning opportunities: [IPAC Canada](#)

- [Seasonal Respiratory Pathogen Guide](#)
- [Recommendations for Outbreak Prevention and Control in Institutions and Congregate Living Settings](#)
- [Best Practices for the Prevention of Acute Respiratory Infection Transmission in All Health Care Settings](#)

	Legacy HKPR	Legacy PPH
Outbreak Reporting	<p>During business hours: outbreaks@lakelandsph.ca 1-866-888-4577 ext. 1232</p> <p>Outside of business hours: 1-888-255-7839</p>	<p>During business hours: Outbreak Form 1-866-888-4577 ext. 1232</p> <p>Outside of business hours: 705-760-8127</p>
Vaccine Information	immunization@lakelandsph.ca	immunizationrecords@lakelandsph.ca