

Influenza Outbreak with Influenza Vaccine Mismatch: Antiviral Medication Recommendations for Non-AHS Staff

A Suspected or Confirmed Influenza Outbreak Is Occurring At Your Worksite

Alberta Health Services, Central Zone, Medical Officers of Health (MOH) recommend all staff receive antiviral medication, Oseltamivir, to prevent infection of staff, residents, and patients. This recommendation applies to both unimmunized and immunized staff, since the influenza strain causing the outbreak and the one in the vaccine are different, reducing the effectiveness of the vaccine.

Immunized staff

- can choose whether to receive antiviral medication since they will have some protection from the vaccine

Unimmunized staff

- cannot continue working where there is an outbreak unless they are taking the antiviral medication
- are allowed to work at another site (or unit) without an influenza outbreak once they have waited three (3) days to ensure they are not infected

Depending on employer-employee health insurance arrangements, employees may be required to pay for antivirals.

Communicable Disease Control (CDC) or the MOH will notify local pharmacies of the outbreak (weekdays only). Some unimmunized staff may have contacted their physician or a prescribing pharmacist (<https://abpharmacy.ca>) in the fall to arrange to have a prescription on-file at their pharmacy. In this case, please visit your pharmacy to obtain the medication.

- Other staff should contact their physician, prescribing pharmacist, or nurse-practitioner for a prescription; your site manager might also provide you with directions for obtaining antivirals.

If you have questions about this recommendation, please contact your site manager.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.