

***Communicable Disease Advisory: Influenza***  
**From the office of the Edmonton Zone Medical Officer of Health**  
December 23, 2019

Dear Colleague;

Re: Influenza Update – Edmonton Zone

The Edmonton Zone & area population is experiencing high, though not unexpected, rates of influenza. We are seeing increases in: hospitalized cases, ED/UCC visits, school absenteeism and calls to HealthLink. Across Edmonton, these increases are related to both Influenza B (usually a milder disease) and Influenza A (H3). It is expected that the season will peak in Edmonton during the time span of December 22-28, 2019.

If you provide patient care in a primary care environment, please consider taking measures to see patients with symptoms of influenza on a priority basis. This will help ensure that the most urgent patients can receive timely service at the Emergency Departments within the city. If in a group practice (i.e., PCN, FCC, etc.), please consider expanding your clinic hours to assist the Zone to keep up with public demand.

Influenza vaccine continues to be strongly recommended and remains available through Physicians' offices, many pharmacies and Public Health. Remind your staff as well as patients to cover their cough, wash their hands routinely and to stay home if they are sick. These are important measures to decrease the spread of any further infections. Up-to-date information regarding public health immunization clinics is available at <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza/influenza.aspx>

To assist in the appropriate use of antiviral medication (e.g. oseltamivir), clinicians are asked to follow the Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (AMMI) Canada guidelines at: [https://www.ammi.ca/Content/AC- Guidance of Antiviral Agents 19-20.pdf](https://www.ammi.ca/Content/AC-Guidance%20of%20Antiviral%20Agents%2019-20.pdf). Please be aware of the potential for facility outbreaks, and take steps to respond to a need for either treatment or prophylaxis in these locations.

As we close the year, I would like to thank you for everything you have done to enhance the health of the public. Thank you, especially, for your assistance during the busy influenza season. If you have questions, please contact the Edmonton Zone Medical Officer of Health office at 780-433-3940.

Sincerely,

Christopher Sikora MD MSc MPH CCFP FRCPC  
Lead Medical Officer of Health – Edmonton Zone  
Alberta Health Services