



Date: December 4, 2024

From: Dr. Dueck, Medical Officer of Health

Re: Immunization of School Pupils Act and School Suspensions; Travel Vaccines; PHAC Statement Regarding B.C. case of H5N1 Avian Influenza; Ordering Beyfortus Monoclonal Antibody for Infants and High-Risk Children; Influenza Vaccine Availability; Lambton Public Health Portal Update

Immunization of School Pupils Act and School Suspensions

To attend school in Ontario, the [Immunization of School Pupils Act, 1990 \(ISPA\)](#), requires students to be vaccinated against the following diseases or obtain a valid exemption: Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella, Meningococcal disease, and Varicella.

Currently, there are approximately 3,400 students who do not have reported up-to-date mandatory vaccines.

Important Dates

January 6, 2025: Letters will be sent to parents/guardians/students notifying them of overdue vaccination status.

January 22, 2025: Deadline to report vaccines already received.

February 1, 2025: Suspension Orders sent for those who are still outstanding.

March 4, 2025: Suspension will begin, for up to 20 days or until proof of vaccination or exemption is received.

Health care professionals may see an uptick in patients requesting vaccines, which can be ordered online using Lambton Public Health's [digital vaccine order form](#). Lambton Public Health (LPH) will be providing catch up vaccine clinics for those with no health care provider. More information about vaccine clinics, vaccine reporting, and the vaccine exemption process can be found on the [Lambton Public Health website](#).

Travel Vaccines

With the colder weather, there comes an increase in travel and a resulting increase in demand for travel vaccines. The Public Health Agency of Canada provides lists of recommended [vaccinations for specific travel destinations](#) and other tips to protect health while travelling, with medical consultation advised at least 6 weeks prior to travel. Consultation on necessary travel vaccines can be accessed from [local travel clinics](#). Please direct patients to local travel clinics as needed, as Lambton Public Health does not provide travel clinics.

PHAC Statement Regarding B.C. case of H5N1 Avian Influenza

On November 9, 2024, [British Columbia \(B.C.\) released news](#) of the first detection of avian influenza due to the H5 virus in a person in B.C., which also represents the first detection of a human case of H5 avian influenza acquired in Canada. No further cases have been identified or epidemiologically linked with this case, with [genomic sequencing results](#) from this case indicating the virus is related to the H5N1 virus circulating in B.C.'s poultry.

Subsequently, on November 13, 2024, the [Public Health Agency of Canada \(PHAC\) released a statement](#), noting “human infection with avian influenza A (H5N1) is rare and usually occurs after close contact with infected birds, other infected animals or highly contaminated environments. These investigations can be challenging and it is not always possible to identify the source of the infection.”

PHAC also indicates that “based on current evidence, the risk of avian influenza for the general public remains low at this time. The risk of avian influenza infection is higher for those who have unprotected exposure to infected animals. PHAC, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and our partners are actively monitoring and collaborating on the domestic and global avian influenza situation... As a general precaution to [prevent avian influenza infections](#), people should not handle live or dead wild birds or other wild animals, and should keep pets away from sick or dead animals. People who work with sick animals or in contaminated environments, such as farmers, [should take precautions](#), including using personal protective measures to reduce the risk of getting or spreading avian influenza.” For more information on avian influenza, who may be at risk, symptoms and prevention measures, please visit the [Government of Canada website](#).

In Ontario, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health has issued memos for hospital partners, including the attached memo on October 3, 2024, regarding enhanced influenza surveillance in hospitalized patients in relation to H5N1 surveillance. Please refer to the October 3, 2024 memo from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, for information regarding

Public Health Ontario Laboratory's test information sheet and enhanced laboratory surveillance details, and hospital surveillance instructions.

PHAC provides information regarding [H5N1 avian influenza for health care professionals](#).

Ordering Beyfortus Monoclonal Antibody for Infants and High-Risk Children

Beyfortus monoclonal antibody supply will continue to be received from the province in a phased delivery schedule throughout November and December. Quantities ordered by providers may need to be reduced in the short term based on current supply.

LPH recommends health care providers continue to follow these guidelines when ordering Beyfortus monoclonal antibody:

- Use the [online vaccine order form](#) for ordering
- Only order what you can administer in the next 2 weeks
- Reorder on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, if needed

For questions contact vaccineorders@county-lambton.on.ca.

Influenza Vaccine Availability

High-dose quadrivalent influenza vaccine is no longer available to order. Standard-dose quadrivalent influenza vaccine continues to be available for those 6 months and older and adjuvanted trivalent inactivated vaccine (Fluad) is available for those 65 years and older. Orders can be submitted using our [online vaccine order form](#).

Lambton Public Health Portal Update

[Lambton Public Health's Health Care Professional portal](#) has recently been updated with improvements to support your practice, including an easy-to-use [forms, referrals, and ordering section](#). LPH encourages health care professionals to bookmark the Health Care Professional portal for quick and easy access to public health tools and resources.