

ONTARIO RESPIRATORY PATHOGEN BULLETIN | 2020-21

Surveillance Week 44: (October 25, 2020 – October 31, 2020)

Current Highlights and Assessment of Influenza Activity in Ontario

Measure of Activity	Assessment of Measure Compared to the Previous Week (Lower, Similar, Higher)	Reasoning Behind Assessment
Laboratory-confirmed Influenza Cases ¹	Similar	"Total influenza: 1 case Influenza A: 1 case Influenza B: 0 cases The 1 influenza case reported in Week 44 was similar to the number reported in Week 43 (2)."
Percent Positivity for Influenza ²	Lower	"Total influenza: 0% (0/787) Influenza A: 0% (0/787) Influenza B: 0% (0/787) The total percent positivity means that 0% of tests that were performed for influenza were positive for influenza in Week 44, which was lower than the percent positivity in Week 43 (0.2%)."
Institutional Influenza Outbreaks ³	Lower	"Total outbreaks: 0 Influenza A: 0 outbreaks Influenza B: 0 outbreaks There were 0 new influenza outbreaks reported in Week 44, which was lower than the number of influenza outbreaks reported in Week 43 (1)."
Health Unit Activity Levels	Lower	"Health Unit influenza activity levels (n=35) Widespread activity: 0 Localized activity: 0 Sporadic activity: 1 No activity: 34"
OVERALL ASSESSMENT	Lower	Influenza activity in Ontario for Week 44 was lower when compared to Week 43.

Notes:

¹ Based on the date the case was reported to the public health unit.

² Positivity among viral respiratory specimens tested by Ontario laboratories that submit results to the Centre for Immunization and Respiratory Infectious Diseases (CIRID). Due to rounding, percentages presented here may not add up to the overall influenza percent positivity.

³ The number of new outbreaks reported for the current week is based on the date the outbreak was reported to the public health unit; when reported date is unavailable, the date the outbreak was created in iPHIS is used.

Influenza Strain Characterization and Antiviral Resistance/Sensitivity Information

Influenza strain characterization and antiviral resistance/sensitivity information for Ontario can be found in the [Laboratory Respiratory Pathogen Surveillance Reports](#).

Outbreak Supplement

Measures of influenza outbreak activity and severity in Ontario

Outbreaks:

One influenza A outbreak was reported as occurring by the end of week 44 of the 2020–21 season. No influenza B outbreaks have been reported during the 2020-21 season.

Cases and severity:

To the end of week 44, there were five cases in the influenza A outbreak, of which zero had pneumonia, zero were hospitalized, and zero died (note that these categories are not mutually exclusive).

Data Sources for this Report

Data for assessment of influenza activity:

- **Integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS):** provides information on laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza reported to local public health units, and institutional outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory pathogens reported to local public health units. iPHIS is administered by the Ontario Ministry of Health; data for this issue was extracted by Public Health Ontario on November 4, 2020.

Cases of influenza A and B are included in the report based on the 'Reported Date', which was the date the public health unit was notified of the case. Cases are assigned to a particular surveillance week based on the episode date entered in iPHIS to better reflect influenza activity. Episode date for a case corresponds to the earliest date on record for the case according to the iPHIS hierarchy (Symptom Onset Date > Specimen Collection Date > Lab Test Date > Reported Date). Cases are excluded from these counts if the episode date is based on reported date, and the reported date occurs after the latest surveillance week.

- **Centre for Immunization and Respiratory Infectious Diseases (CIRID) of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC):** provides information on the number of influenza tests and number that are positive based on submissions from 17 participating laboratories in Ontario including 11 Public Health Ontario Laboratories (PHOLs) and five hospital-based laboratories. The results are assigned to a particular surveillance week based on when test results are reported to PHAC; these data are not updated when results are submitted late for previous surveillance weeks. These data represent the number of specimens tested, which may not necessarily correspond with the number of patients as more than one specimen may have been submitted per patient. Cumulative numbers for the season to date are also available through FluWatch.
- **Activity level as calculated by Public Health Ontario:** Activity levels are assigned based on laboratory confirmations and laboratory-confirmed institutional respiratory infection outbreaks. PHO conducts weekly assessments of influenza activity levels for each PHU jurisdiction using influenza case and outbreak data as reported in iPHIS. Due to lags in data entry in iPHIS, the activity level reported may, in some instances, not align with a PHU's true activity level. Activity levels calculated for a particular surveillance week may not necessarily correspond to the number of new outbreaks reported in the same week because ongoing outbreaks from previous weeks, as well as laboratory confirmed outbreaks in schools, may be included in the assessment of the activity level. Please refer to the detailed definitions for the 2020-2021 season for more information.
- Any outbreak where influenza was identified is reported under the appropriate influenza category ("Influenza A" or "Influenza B") regardless of whether any non-influenza viruses were also identified in the outbreak.
 - Combined influenza A and B outbreaks have been included with influenza A outbreaks in all counts and calculations.
- The date of onset of illness for the first case is used to determine which week to attribute an outbreak to.
- The data for outbreaks and cases includes both open and closed records in iPHIS. Outbreak records that are open in iPHIS may not have complete summary case and severity information entered. Case data on open outbreaks is subject to change.

- Public health units have 15 business days from when an outbreak is declared over to complete their data entry for that outbreak in iPHIS.

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