

2023-24 respiratory illness season update

- Grey-Bruce and Ontario are seeing [increasing rates of respiratory illnesses](#).
- Based on PHO's most recent [Genomic Surveillance Report](#), HV.1, a newer Omicron variant of interest, is the most prevalent lineage in Ontario and projected to increase.
- GBPH encourages Primary Care Providers to continue promoting COVID-19/flu vaccination to patients.
- Local options for community-based PCR testing are extremely limited. Primary Care Providers can collect and submit respiratory specimens for patients. A Positive Rapid Antigen Test is acceptable for initiating COVID-19 treatment. Information on ordering RAT kits: [COVID-19 antiviral treatments and testing](#).

GBPH investigates new local case of pertussis (whooping cough)

- Case is unvaccinated child, residing in southern part of area.
- Follows several cases of pertussis in unimmunized children reported earlier this year in Grey-Bruce and pertussis activity in neighbouring Public Health Units in 2023.
- Routine immunization against pertussis is important in reducing risk of infection and further transmission in our communities.
- [NACI recommends pertussis immunization](#):
 - At 2, 4, and 6 months of age and between 12-23 months;
 - At 4-6 years (booster) and 14-16 years (booster);
 - In adulthood if patient has not received a pertussis-containing vaccine as an adult, especially if they intend on having regular contact with an infant;
 - In all pregnancies, between 27-32 weeks.

Local Strep A cases continue to exceed pre-pandemic levels

- Number of cases of invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease reported in Grey-Bruce higher than pre-pandemic levels, with cases involving both adults and children.
- Public Health Ontario has published updated [Epidemiological information on Group A Strep in Ontario](#).
- Group A Streptococcus (Group A strep, Streptococcus pyogenes) can cause both non-invasive and invasive diseases, including strep throat, scarlet fever, impetigo, cellulitis, necrotizing fasciitis, streptococcal toxic shock syndrome, acute rheumatic fever, and post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis. [Information For Clinicians | CDC](#)
- The Canadian Paediatric Society provides a helpful Practice Point to [guide diagnosis and treatment of GAS pharyngitis](#).
- In some, invasive illness can lead to fatal outcomes. Due to increased activity, we encourage physicians to consider GAS infection in their patients, if indicated.

COVaxON resources

- The [Ministry of Health's COVaxON Resources for Vaccinators: Fall Campaign 2023/24](#) is a consolidated reference guide of COVaxON resources for vaccinators.
- PCPs can access this SharePoint by emailing: vaccinesupplyandlogistics@ontario.ca.
- PCPs can request access to a Public Health I&IT Solutions Branch SharePoint, which includes training recordings/aids, by emailing: PublicHealthSolutions@Ontario.ca.
- If you require assistance with reactivating your COVaxON account, email Jordan de Jong at GBPH at J.deJong@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca.

Resources for Primary Care Professionals

- Ontario Health. [Prevention System Quality Index 2023](#). Details Ontario's progress on policies and programs that can reduce the incidence of chronic disease risk factors and exposures in the population.
- Journal Psychiatry Research, November 2023, CAMH study: [Interactions between genetic risk for 21 neurodevelopmental and psychiatric disorders and sport activity on youth mental health](#).
- CCDR, October 2023, [Infographic on infectious syphilis/congenital syphilis in Canada](#).
- CCDR, October 2023, [Epidemiologic study on the characteristics and clinical outcomes of Paxlovid](#).
- The 2023 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change. [Policy Brief](#).
- Journal Addiction, November 2023, CAMH study: [Cannabis use during pregnancy associated with adverse birth outcomes](#).

Grey Bruce Public Health Media Releases: November 2023

- Nov. 23, 2023 - [‘Attacking Medication Misuse’ campaign a success](#)
- Nov. 23, 2023 - [GBPH sharing strategies, resources to mark Fall Prevention Month](#)
- Nov. 14, 2023 - [GBPH launches campaign to ‘attack’ medication misuse](#)
- Nov. 9, 2023 - [GBPH encourages Grey-Bruce residents to test their homes for radon](#)