

GBPH monitoring local pertussis activity

- GBPH is continuing to see new pertussis cases in under-vaccinated communities.
- [Immunization across the lifespan](#) – for infants, children/adolescents, and adults, especially in pregnancy and if the patient anticipates regular contact with an infant – is important in disease prevention, as the Tdap vaccine doesn't confer life-long immunity.
- If a pertussis infection is suspected or confirmed, [chemoprophylactic antibiotics](#) should be considered, including for pregnant people in their third trimester and infants for out-of-home close contacts, and all in-the-household contacts if there is an infant or pregnant person in the home.

IPAC lapse related to home-based neurologist in London, Ont.

- The Middlesex-London Health Unit is investigating possible exposures to blood-borne infections for patients of Dr. George Rice, a neurologist in London, Ont.
- Patients who received procedures from Dr. Rice between 2019 and September 2023 are encouraged to seek testing for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, and syphilis.

Increased Influenza A activity in Grey-Bruce

- Starting in December, GBPH has seen an increase in influenza activity, including several recent influenza outbreaks in local long-term care homes.
- In flu outbreaks, antiviral treatment or chemoprophylaxis is advised for all residents.
- [Antivirals may also be considered for community-based patients](#) who are at higher risk of complications from influenza.
- Healthcare workers in outbreak settings who did not receive their annual flu vaccine are advised to initiate prophylactic treatment or exclude themselves from work. Staff who are opting out of annual influenza immunization are encouraged to proactively seek a Tamiflu prescription from their healthcare provider in advance of respiratory virus season each year.

Alarming increase in Dengue cases in countries frequented by Canadian travellers

- While dengue is endemic in most South American, Mexican, Central American, and Caribbean countries, the [WHO is reporting an alarming spike](#) in cases in the second half of 2023, with cumulative cases for the year surpassing all previous yearly totals.
- Dengue Virus is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected mosquitoes.
- There is no specific treatment for dengue, but the timely diagnosis, identification of warning signs of severe dengue, and appropriate clinical management are key elements of care to prevent the progression to severe dengue or death.
- Information on testing returning travellers for Dengue Virus: [Public Health Ontario](#).
- Mosquitoes can spread other viruses. Additional testing info: [Public Health Ontario](#).

Travel-related measles case in Windsor-Essex

- The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit is reporting a travel-related case of measles in a vaccinated adult with recent travel to Romania.
- Romania, along with other parts of Europe and Central Asia, are [experiencing increased measles activity](#) due to declines in immunization coverage among children since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Increase in IMD in two parts of Canada

- In late 2023, two Canadian jurisdictions (Eastern Ontario and Manitoba) reported increased Invasive Meningococcal Disease activity.
- In Ontario, this increase was noted in youth and young adults. Most cases have been N. meningitidis serogroup B.
- [Information on meningococcal vaccination](#).

Resources for Primary Care Professionals

- National Safer Supply Community of Practice (NSS-CoP) shares new resources:
 - [Prescribed Safer Supply: Emerging Evidence](#)
 - [Prescribed Safer Supply: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Key Messages on Safer Supply](#)
 - [Safer Supply for Health Care Providers: Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Jan. 30, 2024 - Canadian Public Health Association releases [“Framework for a Public Health Approach to Substance Use.”](#)
 - Encompasses 10 key interconnected principles, which can be adapted depending on context, populations, settings, or substances.
 - Given the prevalence of the negative effects of stigma related to currently illegal psychoactive substances, it is hoped that the consistent application of these principles will lead to a reduction of that stigma.
 - While the framework does not offer specific instructions for implementation, it can be used to inform the development of policies, procedures, and programs across the substance use spectrum.
- Jan. 29, 2024 - Public Health Ontario revises [General Test Requisition Form](#).
- Jan. 12, 2024 - National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) [Guidance on an additional dose of COVID-19 vaccines in the spring of 2024 for individuals at high-risk of severe illness due to COVID-19](#).
- January 2024 - Ministry of Health, [Updated Guidance for Routine & Catch-Up Immunization Services](#). Includes program extensions to 2024 for the following vaccines for missed doses: Hepatitis B; Human papillomavirus (HPV); Shingles; and High-risk program vaccines.