



Office of the Chief Medical Health Officer

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AFTER HOURS ON CALL

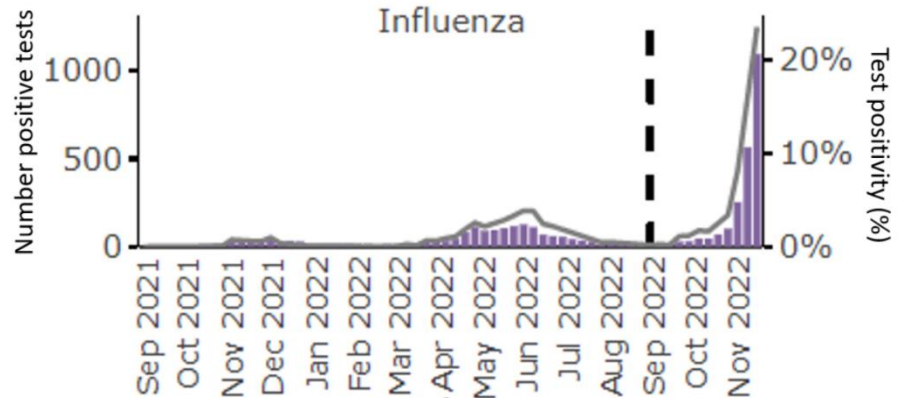
1.800.204.6166

December 7, 2022

Influenza update

Epidemiology

- Influenza is now the most commonly detected respiratory virus in BC



Source: bccdc.ca/health-professionals/data-reports/respiratory-diseases

- We are seeing an earlier start and higher incidence of influenza than typical
The incidence of severe disease is higher than typical, particularly among children

Vaccination

- About a third of Island Health residents have received an influenza vaccination, but uptake is lower in children. This is particularly concerning for children less than 5 years old, who are at higher risk of hospitalization.
Please continue to recommend influenza vaccination to all patients, especially children. The following page can be provided to parents to help them get their child vaccinated for influenza and access routine childhood vaccinations.
Since influenza waves are typically 6-8 weeks long, and it takes up to two weeks to gain protection after vaccination, we ask you to proactively invite young children within your practices to be immunized against influenza as soon as possible. Vaccination history can be accessed through CareConnect.
Physicians and nurse practitioners can order influenza and routine vaccines to administer to their patients through bit.ly/CVPislandhealth. Please call your local public health unit for questions: islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations.

Impact on acute care

- Drs. Menard & Kang have provided an update on the impact to emergency rooms and a request for increased access for pediatric assessments in community: medicalstaff.islandhealth.ca/news-events/pediatric-illness-surge-urgent

Excellent health and care for everyone,  
everywhere, every time.



## Your Medical Health Officers recommend influenza vaccines for children

With influenza season here, we want to remind parents that vaccines are available for children and are a very effective way to reduce the risk of severe disease. We are seeing children hospitalized from influenza here on the island. Vaccination is particularly important for children under 5 years old, who are at a higher risk of harm.

To get your child vaccinated against influenza, register them in the provincial Get Vaccinated system online at [www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca](http://www.getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca) or by calling 1-833-838-2323. Walk-ins are also available – see [bit.ly/FLUislandhealth](http://bit.ly/FLUislandhealth) for schedule. Most Island Health clinics allow for up to two immediate family members to be vaccinated during a child appointment.



If your child needs to get up-to-date with routine childhood vaccines (eg. diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, chickenpox, hepatitis B) or if you have questions about these, call your local public health unit at the phone number below. Influenza vaccines can be provided at the same time.

Campbell River Health Unit	250-850-2110
Comox Valley Health Unit	250-331-8520
Duncan Health Unit	250-709-3050
Esquimalt Health Unit	250-519-5311
Gold River Health Unit	250-283-2626
Ladysmith Health Unit	250-755-3342
Lake Cowichan Health Unit	250-749-6878
Nanaimo Public Health Unit	250-755-3342
Parksville Family Place	250-947-8242
Peninsula Health Unit	250-544-2400

Port Alberni Health Unit	250-731-1315
Port Alice Health Unit	250-284-3555
Port Hardy Health Unit	250-902-6071
Port McNeill Health Unit	250-956-4711
Saanich Health Unit	250-519-5100
Salt Spring Island Health Unit	250-538-4880
Tofino and Ucluelet Public Health Unit	250-725-4020
Victoria Health Unit	250-388-2200
West Shore Health Unit	250-519-3490

For more information on influenza vaccines, visit [islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/the-flu-influenza](http://islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/the-flu-influenza), or call your local public health unit.

Sincerely, your Medical Health Officers:

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*North Island:*

Dr. Charmaine Enns

*Central Island:*

Dr. Sandra Allison

*Cowichan Region:*

Dr. Shannon Waters

*South Island:*

Dr. Mike Benusic

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