

Respiratory Illness Season Communications Toolkit: Older Adults

Purpose

This toolkit is intended for the 2023/24 respiratory illness season to help organizations with the dissemination of respiratory illness prevention and mitigation key messages to older adults in and around Ottawa. Using this toolkit will ensure your organization is aligned with Ottawa Public Health's (OPH) messaging and with other older adult-serving agencies in our community.

This toolkit contains key messages, social media posts with accompanying graphics, partner handles that can be tagged on Facebook and other useful links and resources.

Key messages

Reducing the spread of respiratory illnesses

- Stay up to date on COVID-19 and flu **vaccines**
- **Wash your hands** (or use hand sanitizer) often and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- **Cover your mouth** and nose when you cough or sneeze
- **Disinfect** high-touch surfaces in your home and workplace
- Wear a mask:
 - To protect yourself from viral respiratory illnesses;
 - To protect others at higher risk of severe respiratory illness from getting sick; and
 - When you're recovering from illness

If you have symptoms of respiratory illness, please **stay home until you are fever-free** (without using fever reducing medication) **AND** your symptoms have been improving **for at least 24 hours** (48 hours for vomiting/diarrhea)

- Avoid non-essential mask-less activities for 10 days from when your symptoms start.
 - **If you can't stay home, wear a well-fitting mask.** If you have symptoms of a respiratory illness DON'T VISIT those at high risk of severe illness including those that live in long-term care, retirement homes or in hospital.

Vaccines

- Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself against severe illness, complications, and hospitalization.
- Eligibility varies, be sure to stay up to date on the latest information

COVID-19 Vaccines

- Updated **XBB. 1.5-containing COVID-19 mRNA vaccines are available** to everyone 65+ as of October 10, [2023](#)
- Ottawa Public Health (OPH) offers COVID-19 vaccination through local [community clinics](#) and [neighbourhood health and wellness hubs](#)
 - **Appointments at OPH Community Clinics can be booked** through the [Ontario COVID-19 vaccination portal](#) or by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007)
- There are other ways to get your updated COVID-19 vaccine this fall, check in with your primary health care provider or your local [pharmacy](#)
- As per the Ministry of Health, people 6 months and older are considered up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines if they have received a Fall 2023 COVID-19 dose

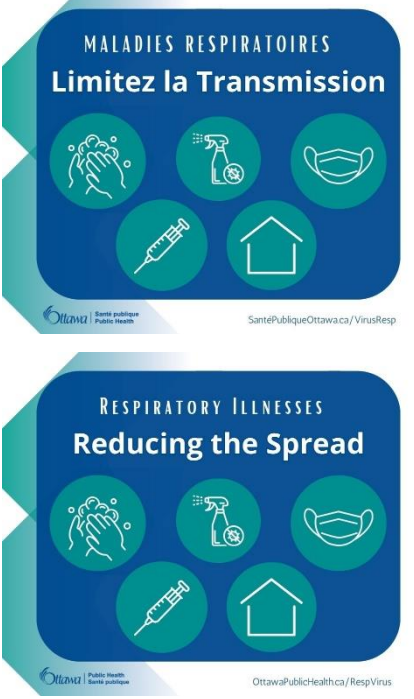


Influenza (flu) Vaccines

- The annual flu vaccine is available at most local pharmacies and through some primary care providers.
- This year, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) is offering the flu vaccine for children 6 months to 5 years and their household members and other [high-risk individuals](#) - **by appointment:** www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Flu
- The flu vaccine and the updated COVID-19 vaccine can be given safely at the same time. Receiving both your annual flu vaccine and updated COVID-19 vaccine(s) is recommended. Get your annual flu vaccine and updated COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible this fall, all approved flu vaccines are safe and effective at helping reduce the risk of flu related complications, including hospitalization and death.



Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) & Antivirals (Paxlovid)

- If you have symptoms of respiratory illness and are at high risk for severe outcomes or complications from COVID-19, free **rapid antigen tests (RATs) are available** to support getting access to COVID-19 antiviral treatment, like Paxlovid.
- Ottawa residents are able to access RAT kits through [various locations across the city](#), like libraries and existing OPH services, like [neighbourhood hubs](#) and [community clinics](#).
- Visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDTesting to learn more about where to access free rapid antigen tests (RATs) across the city and to learn more about antiviral treatment.
- Speak to your healthcare provider or pharmacist about [antiviral treatment](#) (Paxlovid), **treatment with Paxlovid is available and must be taken within a few days** of symptoms starting to be effective

Social Media & Graphics

Topic	Post EN	Post FR	Graphics
<p>Basic prevention</p>	<p>Respiratory illness season is here - there are many ways to reduce the spread. Frequent hand washing, keeping vaccinations up to date, disinfecting high touch surfaces, staying home when sick and wearing a mask are all ways to help protect you and your loved ones.</p> <p>More information: OttawaPublicHealth.ca/RespVirus</p>	<p>Cet automne, pour freiner la propagation des maladies respiratoires et vous protéger vous et vos proches. Lavez-vous souvent les mains, maintenez vos vaccins à jour, désinfectez les surfaces souvent touchées, restez chez vous lorsque vous êtes malade et portez un masque.</p> <p>Plus d'informations: SantePubliqueOttawa.ca/VirusResp</p>	
<p>Masking</p>	<p>Wear a mask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To protect yourself from viral respiratory illnesses; - To protect others at higher risk of severe respiratory illness from getting sick; - When you're recovering from illness <p>More information: OttawaPublicHealth.ca/RespVirus</p>	<p>Portez un masque:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pour vous protéger des maladies respiratoires virales; - Pour protéger les personnes à risque de maladie respiratoire sévère; - Pendant votre convalescence <p>Plus d'informations: SantePubliqueOttawa.ca/VirusResp</p>	
<p>COVID-19 vaccine</p>	<p>The Ministry of Health recommends that individuals receive a dose of the updated COVID-19 vaccine if it has been 6 months since their last COVID-19 vaccine or known COVID-19 infection</p> <p>More information: OttawaPublicHealth.ca/RespVirus</p>	<p>Le ministère de la Santé recommande que les personnes reçoivent une dose du vaccin contre la COVID-19 mis à jour s'il s'est écoulé au moins 6 mois depuis leur dernier vaccin contre la COVID-19 ou leur dernière infection connue à la COVID-19</p> <p>Plus d'informations: SantePubliqueOttawa.ca/VirusResp</p>	

<p>COVID-19 Vaccine</p>	<p>COVID-19 vaccine appointments at OPH Community Clinics can be booked through the Ontario COVID-19 vaccination portal or by calling the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007)</p>	<p>Les rendez-vous de vaccination contre la COVID-19 dans les cliniques communautaires de SPO peuvent être réservés par le portail de vaccination contre la COVID-19 de l'Ontario ou en communiquant avec le Centre provincial de contact pour les vaccins au 1-833-943-3900 (ATS : 1-866-797-0007)</p>	
<p>Flu Vaccine</p>	<p>Getting your annual flu vaccine is an important way to help protect yourself, your family and your community against seasonal flu.</p> <p>It is especially important for high risk groups – like older adults - to get the flu vaccine to prevent serious illness, complications and hospitalizations.</p> <p>More information: OttawaPublicHealth.ca/flu</p>	<p>Recevoir votre vaccin annuel contre la grippe est un moyen important de vous protéger, ainsi que votre famille et les membres de votre communauté, contre la grippe saisonnière</p> <p>Il est particulièrement important que les groupes à haut risque – comme les personnes âgées - se fassent vacciner contre la grippe pour prévenir la maladie grave, les complications et les hospitalisations.</p> <p>Plus d'informations: https://www.SantePubliqueOttawa.ca/Grippe</p>	
<p>Flu Vaccine</p>	<p>The flu vaccine is available through local pharmacies and your regular health care provider.</p> <p>If you are unable to access the flu vaccine at a pharmacy or with your health care provider, you can book with OPH via this link</p> <p>More information: OttawaPublicHealth.ca/flu</p>	<p>Le vaccin contre la grippe est disponible dans les pharmacies locales et chez votre professionnel de santé habituel.</p> <p>Si vous ne pouvez pas vous faire vacciner en pharmacie ou chez votre médecin, vous pouvez réserver votre vaccin auprès de SPO en cliquant sur le lien suivant</p> <p>Plus d'informations: https://www.SantePubliqueOttawa.ca/Grippe</p>	

<p>Rapid Antigen Tests</p>	<p>Looking for a rapid antigen test (RAT)?</p> <p>Ottawa residents can access RATs through existing OPH services, like neighbourhood hubs and community vaccine clinics.</p> <p>More information: http://ottawapublichealth.ca/COVIDtesting</p>	<p>À la recherche d'un test antigénique rapide (TAR)?</p> <p>Les résidentes et résidents d'Ottawa peuvent s'en procurer aux points de service de SPO, comme les carrefours et les cliniques de vaccination communautaires.</p> <p>Plus d'informations: http://santepubliqueottawa.ca/depistageCOVID</p>	
<p>Mental Health</p>	<p>Staying home when sick is a good way to reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses. You can connect with friends and family through video calls or text. Staying connected with others can improve our physical and mental health and help us cope with the stresses of life.</p> <p>More information: https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/healthy-aging-and-mental-health.aspx</p>	<p>Rester à la maison lorsque vous êtes malade est un bon moyen de réduire la propagation des maladies respiratoires. Vous pouvez rester en contact avec vos amis et votre famille par le biais d'appels vidéo ou de SMS. Rester en contact avec les autres peut améliorer notre santé physique et mentale et nous aider à faire face au stress de la vie.</p> <p>Plus d'informations: https://www.santepubliqueottawa.ca/fr/public-health-topics/healthy-aging-and-mental-health.aspx</p>	

Partner Handles to Tag on Facebook

Feel free to tag OPH and/or the below handles to keep everyone in the loop

- [Ottawa Public Health](#)
- [Bruyère](#)
- [The Ottawa Hospital](#)
- [Queensway Carleton Hospital](#)
- [Hôpital Montfort](#)
- [City of Ottawa](#)
- [Ottawa Recreation and Culture](#)



Useful Links

Web page/Document	English	Français
Respiratory Illnesses (homepage): OPH respiratory illness “landing” page that is composed of some basic information about respiratory illnesses and contains links to other resources	Respiratory Illnesses: homepage (website)	Maladies Respiratoires: page d'accueil (site web)
October 10th PSA: the PSA released on October 10 th about COVID-19 & flu vaccine eligibility and availability	“Ottawa Public Health to start offering flu vaccines and the new updated COVID-19 vaccines for eligible residents” (website)	“Santé publique Ottawa commencera à offrir aux résidents admissibles les vaccins contre la grippe et les nouveaux vaccins contre la COVID-19 mis à jour” (site web)
About Respiratory Illness: goes over signs and symptoms, what to do if you’re sick and how to reduce the spread	About Respiratory Illness (PDF)	A Propos des Maladies Respiratoires (PDF)
Booking a flu vaccine appointment with OPH: OPH encourages individuals to get flu vaccine at a pharmacy or their HCP, if not they can book with OPH if they are eligible (eligibility on booking page)	OPH Flu Booking (website)	Système de rendez-vous SPO (site web)
Booking a COVID-19 vaccine appointment (provincial booking system): if individuals don’t feel comfortable making their appointment online, they can call the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900 (TTY: 1-866-797-0007)	Ontario COVID-19 Vaccine Booking (website)	Rendez-vous pour les vaccins contre la COVID-19 pour l’Ontario (site web)
Healthy Aging and Mental Health: website with resources to help reduce stigma, build resilience and build & maintain social connections	Healthy Aging and Mental Health (website)	Bien vieillir et la santé mentale (site web)

If you have any questions or would like to request any modified versions of the products listed in this toolkit (i.e. a printable poster of one of the graphics) please reach out to Sara Noyes (sara.noyes@ottawa.ca) or Julie Turnbull (julie.turnbull@ottawa.ca)