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Planning for Respiratory Virus Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings

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Disclosure

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants should be able to:

- Understand the differences in the key features of influenza and COVID-19
- Review infection prevention and control measures commonly used for COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses
- Describe influenza testing, and the use of antiviral medications in treatment and outbreak management of influenza outbreaks
- Describe the importance of influenza vaccination in the context of possible co-circulation of influenza and COVID-19

COVID-19 Resources

A number of resources have been developed for congregate living settings regarding COVID-19:

- [Long-term care landing page](#)
- [Congregate living setting landing page](#)

Some specific resources:

- [COVID-19: Infection Prevention and Control Checklist for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes](#)
- [COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Congregate Living Settings](#)
- [Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings](#)

COVID-19 in Congregate Living Settings

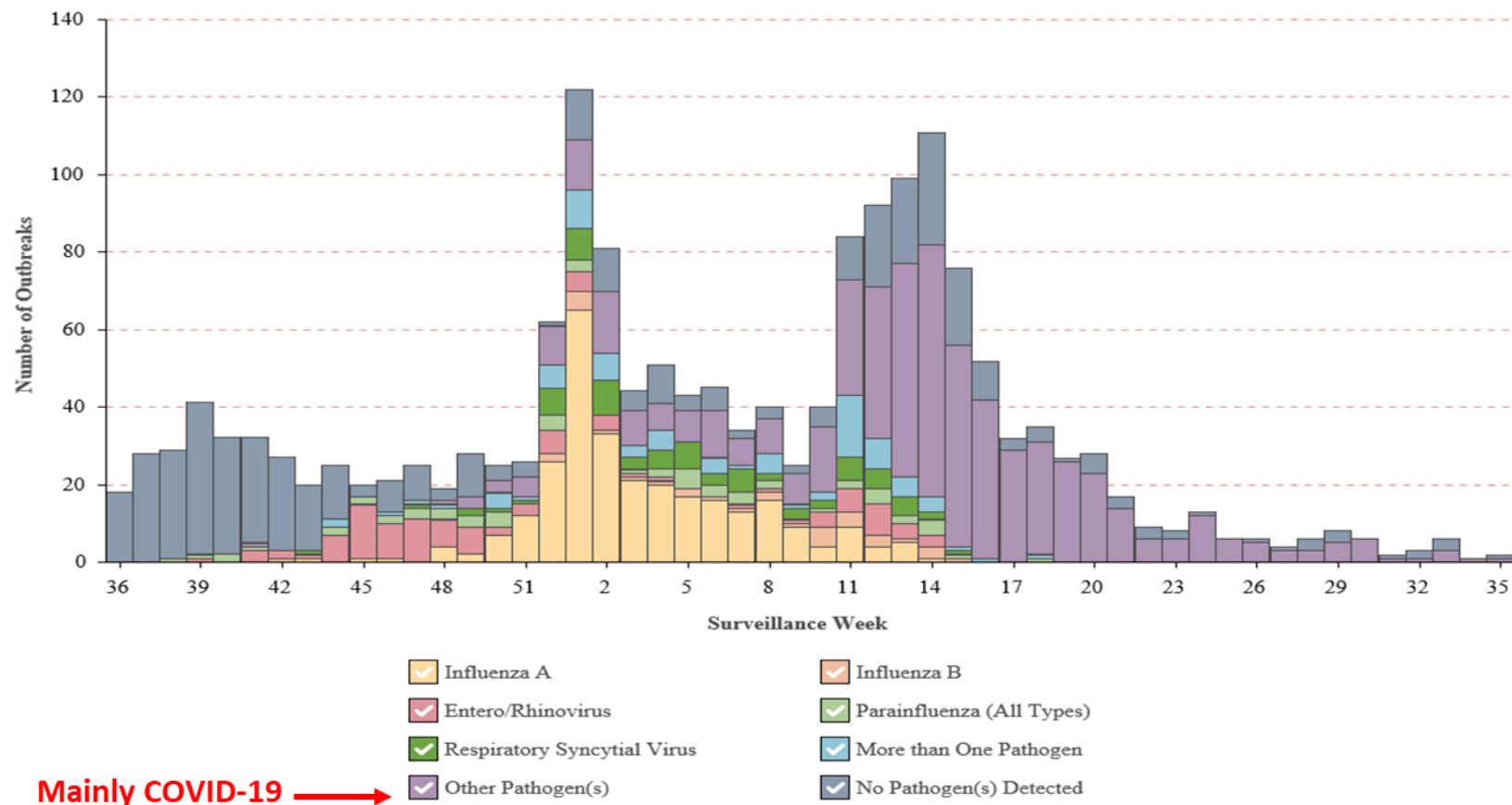
- Many of the same measures for COVID-19 outbreaks are also relevant for other respiratory viruses, including influenza
- Prevent introduction and facilitate early detection of COVID-19 by:
 - Screening
 - Ensuring ill staff stay home
- Infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures are key:
 - Physical distancing and avoiding sharing items
 - Universal masking of staff for source control and masking of residents, if possible
 - Enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection
 - Frequent and adequate hand hygiene and avoid touching your face
 - Respiratory etiquette
 - Correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - Cohorting during an outbreak

Respiratory Viruses

- A number of respiratory viruses can circulate during the late fall and winter months (known as the ‘respiratory virus season’):
 - Influenza
 - Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)
 - Rhinovirus and many other viruses
 - This year, SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)
- Can cause similar symptoms and can only be distinguished with laboratory testing
- COVID-19, influenza and outbreaks of respiratory illness are reportable to your local public health unit
- Contact your [local public health unit](#) if you suspect an outbreak:
 - A confirmed case of COVID-19
 - A confirmed case of influenza
 - Two or more cases of residents or staff with respiratory illness

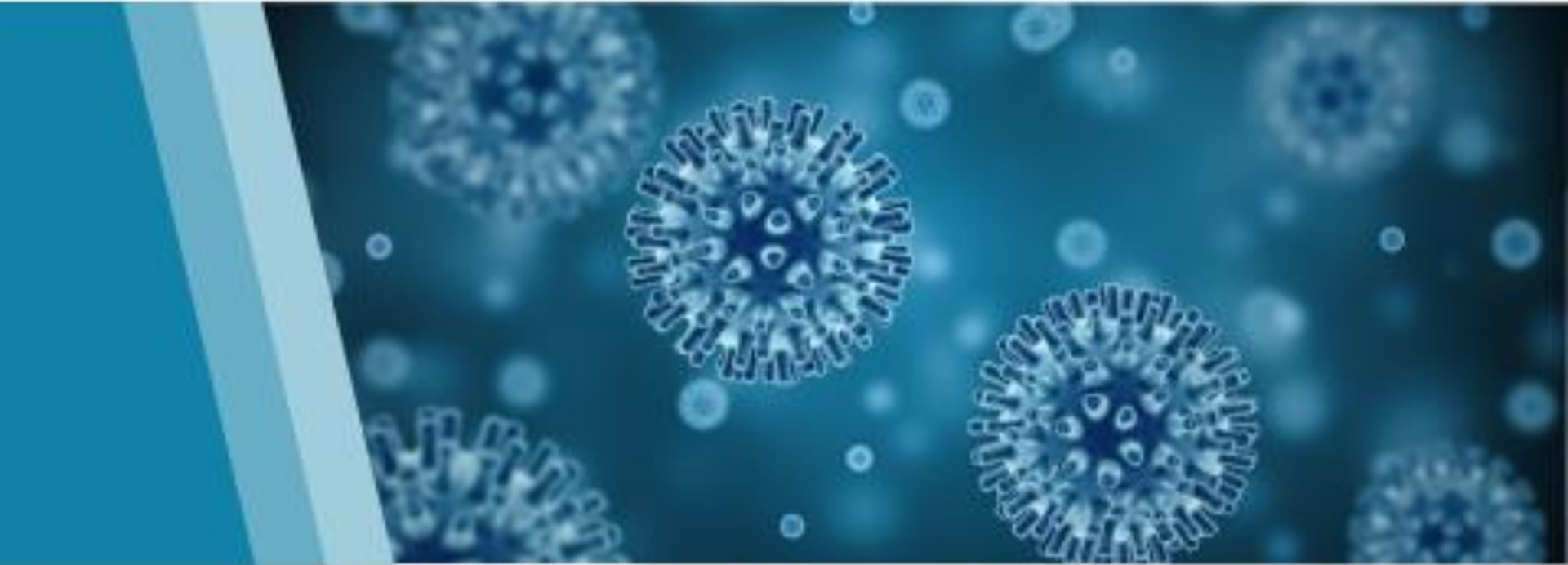
Respiratory Viruses in Ontario, 2019-20

Number of Institutional Respiratory Infection Outbreaks by Viral Pathogen Detected by Surveillance Week



Source: Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Ontario respiratory pathogen bulletin [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [cited 2020 Oct 1]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/data-and-analysis/infectious-disease/respiratory-pathogens-weekly>

Overview of Influenza



Overview of Influenza Virus (1 of 2)

- In Canada, influenza is estimated to cause an annual average of 12,200 hospitalizations and 3,500 deaths¹
- Typically circulates every year between November and April ('influenza season')
- Sudden onset of fever, cough, muscle aches, fatigue, sore throat and/or headache
 - Vomiting and diarrhea are not typical
- Lasts 2 - 7 days

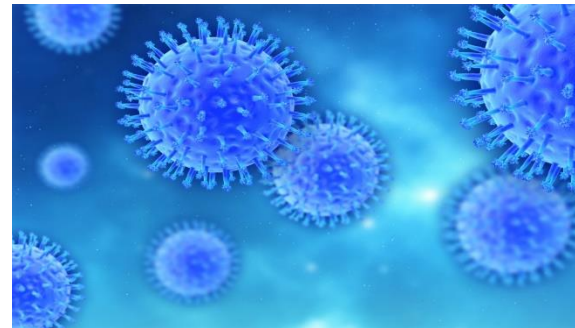
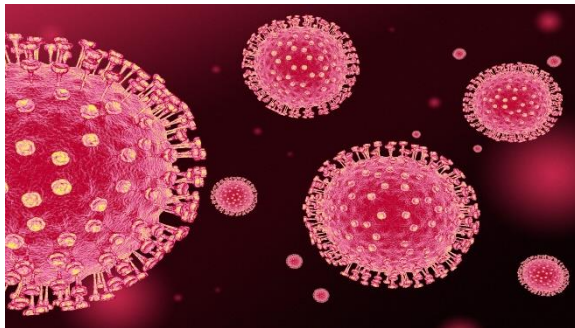
¹ National Advisory Committee on Influenza (NACI), Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2014-2015. <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/naci-ccni/flu-grippe-eng.php>

Overview of Influenza Virus (2 of 2)

- Complications include pneumonia and worsening of chronic lung disease, heart disease or other underlying medical conditions
- People at higher risk of developing severe illness or complications include:
 - People living with heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer, obesity, immunosuppressive conditions or other chronic medical conditions
 - Adults 65 years of age and older
 - Pregnant women
 - Infants and young children
 - Indigenous populations

Similarities Between Influenza and COVID-19

- Both spread primarily from person-to-person by respiratory droplets, from touching contaminated surfaces and possibly from small aerosols under certain conditions
- Have similar symptoms, except for loss of smell and/or taste with COVID-19
- All public health measures for COVID-19 previously discussed will also be effective at limiting the spread of influenza and other respiratory viruses



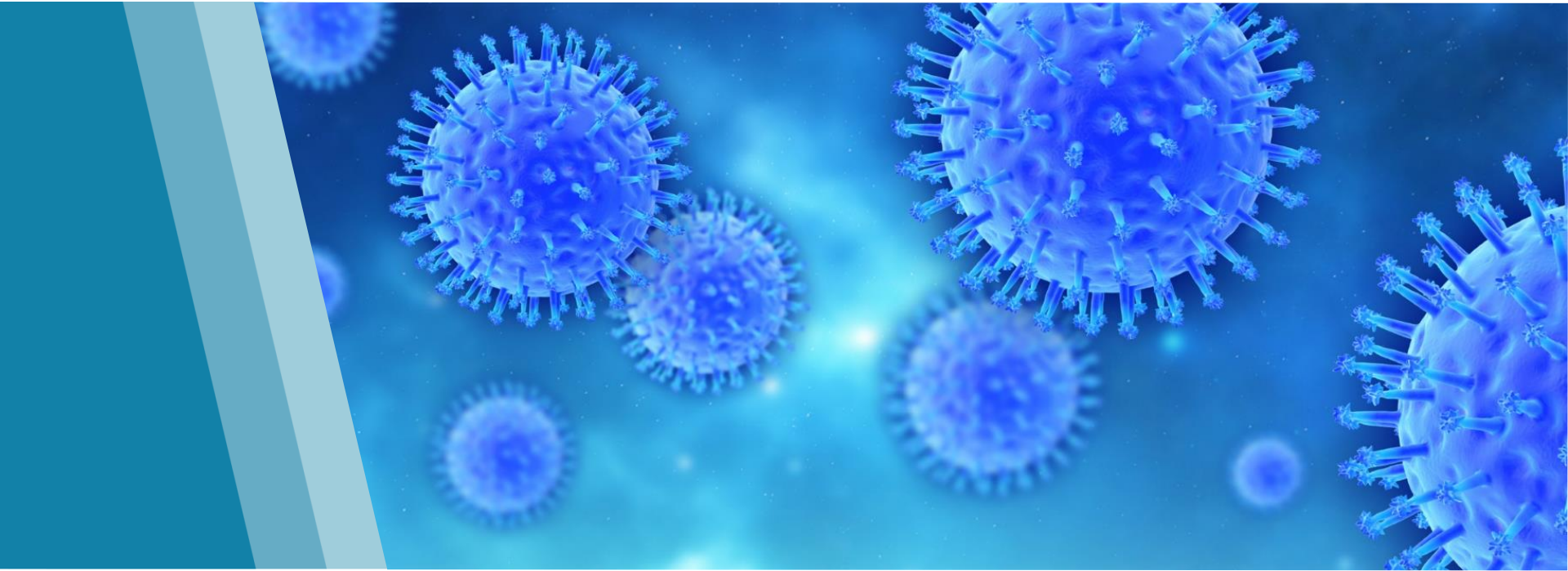
Differences Between Influenza and COVID-19

- COVID-19 is more infectious than influenza
- Case fatality (number of deaths among identified cases) is higher for COVID-19 than influenza
- Vaccines are widely available for influenza prevention
- Antiviral medications are available for influenza treatment and in outbreaks, also for influenza prevention
- Testing strategies are somewhat different for influenza and COVID-19
- Cohorting is not generally used in influenza outbreaks, but commonly used for COVID-19 outbreaks

Importance of Respiratory Viruses in the 2020-21 Season

- The 2020-21 respiratory virus season is unique
 - COVID-19 has raised awareness regarding respiratory viruses, resulting in more testing in congregate living settings that may detect influenza and other respiratory virus outbreaks
- It is important to plan for and be prepared to respond to outbreaks of influenza and other respiratory viruses, in addition to COVID-19
- It is also possible that more than one respiratory virus (e.g. COVID-19 **and** influenza) may be detected during an outbreak

Preventing and Managing Influenza Outbreaks



Preventing and Managing Influenza Outbreaks

- Immunization
- Testing
- Antivirals



Influenza Vaccines

- Made each year in anticipation of the influenza strains that are likely to circulate
- Helps prevent influenza and decrease spread to others
- Decrease burden on the health care system
- Decrease illness that can be confused with COVID-19 and decrease need for COVID-19 testing
- Decrease chance of co-infection in individuals (influenza and COVID-19) and outbreaks with both viruses in the same facility
- No evidence that influenza vaccine has any effect on COVID-19
- Encourage and support all staff/residents to receive the influenza vaccine as early as possible once available

Testing (1 of 3)

- Residents/staff with symptoms of a respiratory illness are advised to be tested for COVID-19
- They are also eligible to be tested for influenza and/or other respiratory viruses
 - Testing recommendations will depend on local respiratory virus activity
- If you suspect an outbreak in your facility, contact your [local public health unit](#)
 - A confirmed case of COVID-19
 - A confirmed case of influenza
 - Two or more cases of residents or staff with respiratory illness

Testing (2 of 3)

- Your local public health unit will help:
 - Determine which viruses to test for (COVID-19 with or without other respiratory viruses)
 - To ensure the [PHO Laboratory COVID-19 Virus Test Requisition Form](#) is completed correctly, including outbreak number and indicating “institution / all group living settings”
- Onsite versus offsite testing:
 - **Onsite:**
 - Ensure appropriate training, medical directives, equipment
 - **Offsite:**
 - Determine offsite testing locations and plan for transportation
 - Bring requisition with appropriate information

Testing (3 of 3)

- **All respiratory outbreaks (COVID-19 or not):**
 - All symptomatic residents and staff should be tested for COVID-19
- **COVID-19 outbreaks:**
 - Asymptomatic residents and staff may be directed to be tested for COVID-19 at the discretion of local public health unit
- **Non-COVID-19 outbreaks:**
 - Testing for other (non-COVID-19) respiratory viruses is generally limited to the first four samples submitted from residents and/or staff
 - In some situations, additional testing can be considered in consultation with your local public health unit and the Public Health Ontario Laboratory

Antiviral Medications for Influenza Outbreaks

- Used in closed facilities (fixed population), particularly if residents are at higher risk for complications
- Used to treat ill residents and prevent infection in well residents
- Important to start as soon as possible
 - Prevents well residents from getting sick
 - Keeps ill residents from getting any sicker

Oseltamivir

- Oseltamivir is used in influenza outbreaks
- Safe at all ages and in pregnant women
- Use for both treatment, and in outbreaks, for prevention
 - Treatment – twice daily for 5 days
 - Prevention in outbreaks – once daily until outbreak over
- Common side effects include nausea and vomiting
 - Taking oseltamivir with food may help reduce these symptoms

Planning for Antiviral Medication

- In advance of the influenza season, arrange for a medical directive or individual orders for antiviral medications
- Ensure you can reach health care providers in case an outbreak is suspected
- Ensure pharmacies can provide the antiviral medications rapidly, including on weekends and holidays

What to Do When Waiting for Test Results?

- Isolate ill residents in their rooms and send ill staff home
- Enhance monitoring for other ill residents and staff
- Re-enforce the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and frequent environmental cleaning
- Prepare for antiviral administration if needed
- Prepare communications and staffing plans

Final Considerations

- Encourage influenza vaccination for all residents and staff
- Continue to follow all recommendations for COVID-19 prevention and screening
- Prepare for outbreaks by considering how to obtain antiviral medications and testing
- Call your local public health unit if you suspect a respiratory virus outbreak

Influenza Resources for Congregate Living Settings

- **Planning for Respiratory Virus Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings**
 - Supports congregate living settings prepare for the upcoming respiratory virus season
- **FAQs: Antiviral Medication Use During an Influenza Outbreak in Congregate Living Settings**
 - Supports administrators and staff members in congregate living settings to use influenza antiviral medications during influenza outbreaks, with a focus on the use of oseltamivir
- **At A Glance: Key Features of influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and Other Common Respiratory Viruses**
 - Provides a high-level overview of some of the features of the respiratory viruses that could circulate this respiratory virus season

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Thank You! Questions?

For More Information About This Presentation, Contact:

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