

November 4, 2024

Dear Parents and Guardians,

With the colder weather, we are seeing an increase in respiratory and gastrointestinal illness, and we need your help. By working together, we can protect our students and staff from severe illness as we spend more time indoors and closer together. Please follow the tips below for a healthy fall and winter!

Reduce the spread

- Stay home if sick. Symptoms of illness may include:
 - Fever, cough, runny nose, congestion (nasal and/or chest)
 - Sore throat, hoarse voice
 - Joint or muscle pain, fatigue
 - Abdominal pain, vomiting/diarrhea
- If your child experiences respiratory symptoms, they must feel better for at least 24 hours before returning to school, daycare, or work. If they experience gastrointestinal symptoms, they must feel better for at least 48 hours before returning to school, daycare and work.
- Wash your hands often.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or using your upper sleeve.
- Wear a well-fitted, high-quality mask in crowded indoor settings with poor ventilation, especially if at higher risk of getting sick.
- Increase cleaning and disinfection around your home when people are ill.
- If ill with vomiting and/or diarrhea, ensure that your disinfectant is effective against norovirus. Read and follow disinfectant label instructions.

Stay up to date with COVID-19, flu and routine vaccines

- Different vaccines protect you for different amounts of time. Staying up to date with routine vaccinations is a crucial preventive step in protecting your child's health and reducing the risk of serious illness overall.
- COVID-19 and flu vaccines generally protect against severe disease for around six months to one year.
- The updated [COVID-19 vaccines](#) specifically target the KP.2 variant and will better protect from the variants spreading now.
- Everyone 6 months of age and older are encouraged to book an appointment to receive their COVID-19 and flu vaccines through their health care provider or local pharmacies. Pharmacies offering COVID-19, and flu vaccines can be found at Ontario.ca/vaccine-locations.
- Halton Region Public Health will be offering COVID-19 vaccines to children 6 months to 5 years of age. Appointments can be booked [online](#).

Where to Go for Care

- Call your doctor or primary care provider.
- Call Health Connect Ontario at 811 or [chat online with a nurse 24/7](#).
- Access an Urgent Care clinic for non-life-threatening illnesses or injuries.
- If you or a family member are experiencing a **medical emergency** or **severe injury**, visit your nearest emergency department.

More information

Please visit Halton Region and Health Canada's webpages for updated information on:

- [COVID-19](#)
- [Influenza \(the flu\)](#)
- [Respiratory Syncytial Virus \(RSV\)](#)
- [Norovirus- Canada.ca](#)

Halton Region Public Health

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