

# Public Health Matters

*A Newsletter for Health Care Professionals*

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## Message from the Medical Officer of Health

Dear Colleagues

I started my medical career as a family physician some decades ago. I entered the field of public health practice because of a local opportunity and my strong feeling for the value to preventive medicine on a population basis rather than patient by patient.

Currently there is an opportunity in the Timiskaming area for a physician seeking a change. Public Health is a very worthwhile and rewarding challenge. If you might have any interest, contact Randy Winters, Acting CEO and Director of Corporate Services at 705.647.4305 ext. 2224.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Alex Hukowich, Medical Officer of Health (A)*

## Infectious Diseases: Health Care Provider Reminders

### Gonorrhea Treatment

The treatment of Gonorrhea is monitored by public health and reported annually to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. Refer to these [Guidelines for Testing and Treatment of Gonorrhea in Ontario](#).

Public Health Ontario released a report on the treatment patterns for gonorrhea in Ontario. Results are shared on treatment by age group, sex, and by STI risk factors as well as by Public Health Unit area. Since the release of Ontario's first gonorrhea testing and treatment guidelines, the percentage of cases receiving recommended first line treatment has increased, however overall remain suboptimal. The report is [here](#).

### Reportable Diseases

Remember to collect samples for any suspect reportable diseases like Mumps and to report suspect and/or confirmed cases to public health. You can find the test directory here:

<http://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/LaboratoryServices/Pages/Index.aspx>

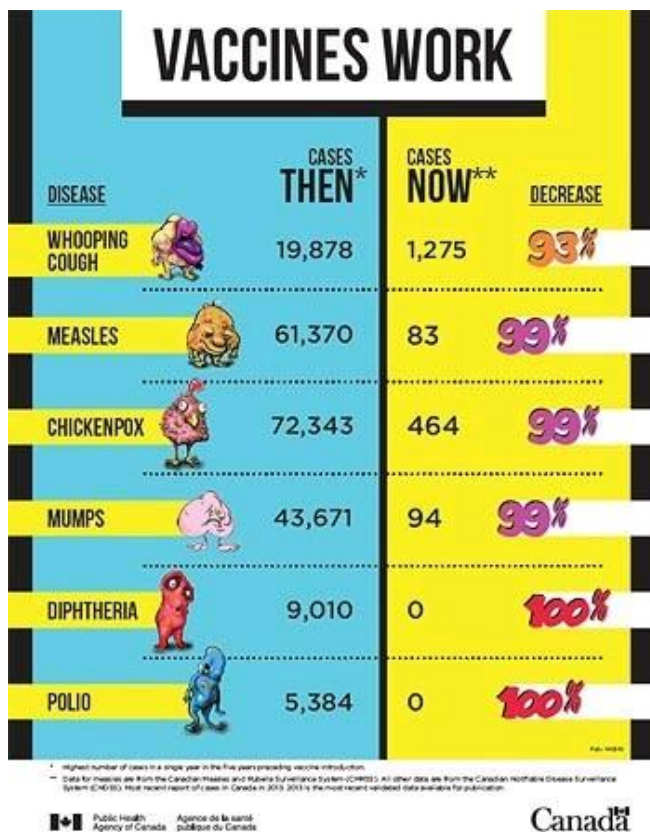
Click here for the [List of Reportable Diseases](#) and the [Reportable Disease Notification Form](#).

### Vaccine Updates

**DTaP-IPV** is being replaced with DTaP-IPV-Hib. Quadracel and Infanrix-IPV vaccines are no longer being marketed in Canada. After consultation with Public Health Ontario, the MOHLTC determined that Pediacel (DTaP-IPV-Hib) is an appropriate substitute despite the extra doses of Hib.

**Gardasil 9** has now replaced HPV4 as the publicly-funded immunizing agent for prevention of Human Papilloma Virus. It is the most effective strategy for the prevention of cervical cancer in females and penile cancer in males. Promoting the HPV vaccine as a cancer-prevention strategy may be most effective.

**FluZone** is a high-dose trivalent influenza vaccine (TIV) which has been approved for use in Canada for adults ≥65 years of age. FluZone has demonstrated that it provides superior protection compared with the standard dose TIV for adults ≥65 years of age. In fact, the superior relative protection appears to increase with increasing age over 65 years. FluZone is not publicly funded but is available for purchase at participating pharmacies.

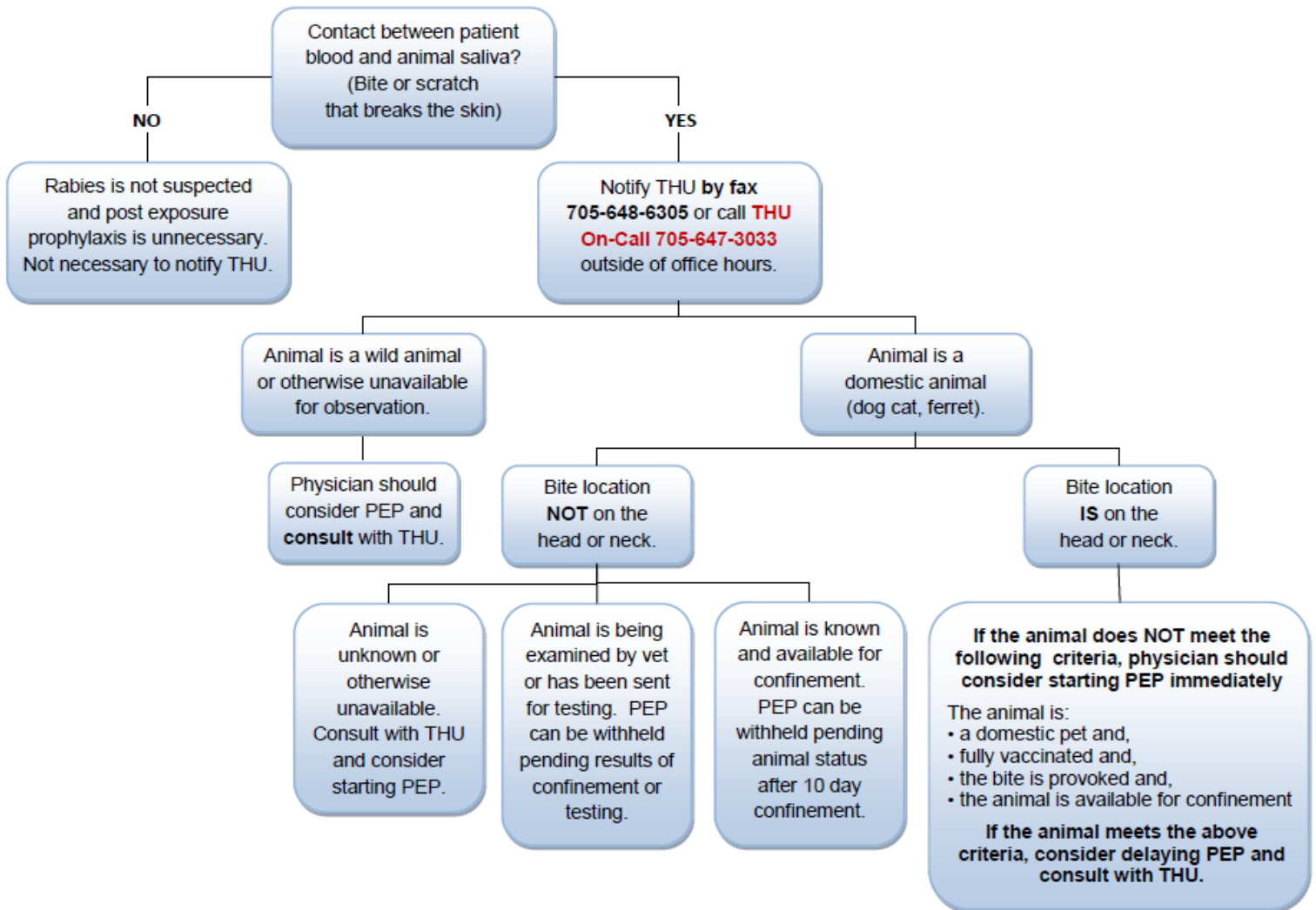


**Vaccine Safety and Effectiveness:** Clinicians are often faced with the challenge of answering questions about vaccine safety. There are [many resources](#) to assist you through these discussions. Arising concerns about vaccine effectiveness and vaccine safety can be a great opportunity for health teaching and for dispelling myths.

Infographic source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/healthy-living/vaccines-work-infographic.html>

### Rabies Post-Exposure Prophylaxis Decision Making Tree

All animal bites must be reported to the health unit. Please see below for the Timiskaming Health Unit’s algorithm for deciding whether post-exposure prophylaxis is indicated or not. Immediately washing and flushing of the wound with soap and water is imperative and likely the most effective procedure in the prevention of rabies. Suturing the wound should be avoided if possible. Tetanus prophylaxis and antibacterial drugs should be given as required.



PH (04.14)

## Sexual and Reproductive Health

### Access to Mifegymiso

Challenges with seeking abortion care in rural and northern Ontario are mitigated with Mifegymiso now available and publically funded in Ontario. While pregnancy and post abortion counselling is provided to priority populations through public health sexual health clinics, abortions services are not. The Timiskaming Health Unit would refer any clients who may require Mifegymiso to a health care provider who is able to prescribe and dispense. As timely referrals are critical and as availability helps to address equitable access to abortion care, the THU is interested to learn more about local capacity and any barriers to providing this treatment option. For more information or to discuss/share local capacity, please contact Erin Cowan: [cowane@timiskaminghu.com](mailto:cowane@timiskaminghu.com) or 705.647.4305 to discuss.

Recent recommendations and advice to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care for cessation services and more can be found here:

[Smoke-Free Ontario Modernization Report \(October 2017\)](#).

*“2.2 Implement a Visible Network of High Quality, Person-Centred Cessation Services” p.37*

## Addressing Tobacco use in Timiskaming

The district of Timiskaming has the highest tobacco use rates in all of Ontario. According to most recent data (2013/14), 39.7% of males and 21.6% of females in the Timiskaming District smoke. The average in Ontario is 21.4% males and 14.2% females. (Source: *Canadian Community Health Survey*).

Given the impact of tobacco use on the individual and the health system, community providers working together on tobacco cessation is an important local strategy to address this problem. Timiskaming’s **Local Tobacco Cessation Network (LTCN)** is a community of professionals from a variety of local organizations working to lower tobacco use rates in Timiskaming. **To join the LTCN** contact Laurel Beardmore 1-866-747-4305 (2266) or beardmorel@timiskaminghu.com.

## Fall Prevention Month

### Tools for Health Care Providers to promote healthy aging and prevent the risk of a fall.

This November, partners in the *Stay on Your Feet* initiative are encouraging older adults to reduce their risk of a fall through **medication management**. Messages include *Know your medication and take as directed, Ask questions, Have medication reviews with a Health Care Provider or Pharmacist annually and Dispose of expired or unused medication safely*. Visit the [THU Youtube Channel](#) to view a “Medication Management” ad airing across the NE this November.



Fall risk **screening tools and patient resources** including medication management factsheets and medicine cleanout/disposal bags, **are available to integrate into your practice**. For more information or resources, contact Lorna Desmarais @ 1-866-747-4305 (2239) or [desmaraisl@timiskaminghu.com](mailto:desmaraisl@timiskaminghu.com).



## Travel Health

### Zika Virus

**New Zika Virus Recommendations from the Public Health Agency of Canada have been published [here](#). Remember:** Zika virus can be sexually transmitted. Review the following recommendations with female and male travellers:

**PREGNANT WOMEN:** Should ALWAYS use condoms or avoid having sex for the duration of their pregnancy if their partner has travelled to an area with Zika virus.

**WOMEN WISHING TO BECOME PREGNANT:** Should wait at least 2 months before trying to conceive to ensure that any possible Zika virus has cleared the body.

**MALE TRAVELLERS:** If their partner is pregnant, should use condoms correctly and consistently, or avoid having sex, for the duration of the pregnancy. Should wait 6 months before trying for a pregnancy by using a condom correctly and consistently, or by avoiding having sex. Should consider using condoms or avoid having sex with any partner for 6 months.


## Other Resources and Information

**Naloxone:** The Timiskaming Health Unit has just become the newest Ontario Naloxone Program site. In 2018, health unit staff will be able to dispense Naloxone nasal spray kits to clients who use opioids and their family and friends. Locally, several pharmacies dispense injectable Naloxone. The kits include: two doses of 4mg of Naloxone inside a pre-filled nasal spray, gloves, a card indicating proof of training, and a poster directing the rescuer on how to administer the medication and provide chest compressions.

**Medicine Cabinet Clean Out Campaign** - this November THU is encouraging people to **clean out their medicine cabinets**. 'One in 10 students in grades 7 to 12 in Ontario report using a prescription opioid non-medically in the past year. About 60% of past year users report getting their drugs from home.' (*Drug Use Among Ontario Students, OSDUHS Findings, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health*). Information for parents and caregivers can be found at [www.drugfreekidscanada.org](http://www.drugfreekidscanada.org) and [www.parentactionondrugs.org](http://www.parentactionondrugs.org). For information and promotional medicine cabinet clean out bags contact the THU.

**Revised Fall Prevention Best Practice Guidelines.** RAO has just released revised Clinical Best Practice Guidelines - [Preventing Falls and Reducing Injury From Falls, Third Edition](#). This comprehensive document is of interest to those in the health system to inform areas such as policies, protocols, assessments and interventions and includes a focus on the prevention of falls and fall injuries for adults.


**Older Adults Fall Prevention - Prescription for a Healthy Independent Life.** Local partners have joined together to develop an [inventory of physical activity opportunities](#) for older adults in Timiskaming. Most are free of charge, group classes that focus on balance, strength and flexibility. **You can encourage use of these classes and prescribe exercise!**



**PRESCRIPTION FOR A HEALTHY INDEPENDENT LIFE**

**Be Active**

- Join a balance focused class such as Stand Up or Tai Chi
- Work on strength and balance with exercises at home
- Aim for at least 30 minutes of activity/day



For more information contact Lorna Desmarais [desmaraisl@timiskaminghu.com](mailto:desmaraisl@timiskaminghu.com) or 1-866-747-4305 ext 2239

